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WILL HE FIND HER?

A Romance of New York and New Orleans.

BY WINTER SUMMERTON.

NEW YORK:
DERBY & JACKSON, 498 BROADWAY.
1860.

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To

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,

THE HON. A. B. MEEK,

OF ALABAMA,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THE AUTHOR.

OCT 10 194[illegible]

PREFACE.

"WILL HE FIND HER?" was written without a view to publication, and under circumstances of suffering and sorrow. The facts on which the romance is raised, had long been in my possession, and were only exhumed from the caverns of the mind and spread open before the dear partner of my life, to divert and enliven her fast fleeting moments, upon the wings of which her angel spirit was being wafted to eternity. She went away before the story was quite finished, and in answer to her latest wish *expressed*, I promised to publish the narrative that had filled her soul with exquisite emotions during the *clear bright hours* of slowly but surely approaching dissolution!

Styled a romance, from the first to the last page there is not a line unfounded in truth. The subjects in the book are *real*, and owe nothing to me beyond the light and shade by which I have rendered the dim and undefined realities of life bolder and brighter to the eye and mind.

THE AUTHOR.

[redacted]

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WILL HE FIND HER?

CHAPTER I.

DROWSY PETER AND THE WASHINGTON BALL ROOM.

The night was dark, and the rain—a New Orleans December rain—came slanting down, hurled by the northeast biting blast beneath the low sheds and balconies that most of the houses in the French part of the city are deformed with, and under which—at the time of which we write—"les misérables" were wont to seek scant shelter from weather and watchmen. On this night, the twenty-fourth of December, 18—, on St. Phillip street, near the corner of Bourbon, a figure stood beneath a projecting shed, close against the hovel that sustained it. It was a man who stood there, wrapped in a coarse drab overcoat similar to those worn by the then firemen of New York city. His pantaloons were of thick coarse stuff, and the legs were thrust in a pair of heavy water boots. His hat was of the color of his coat, and had a broad brim, which exposure to the weather had softened so much that it drooped downward in such a manner as almost entirely to conceal his face; and such a face it was! Employing the privilege of all authors, I will describe it, for its owner will prove a conspicuous character in these pages.

His brow was broad but flat, and had it not been for his huge cheek bones, which protruded almost to deformity, the lines of his front visage, from his eyes to his chin, which was long and pointed, would have resembled a pair of inverted dividers, opened at the points, at an angle of twenty-two and a half degrees. Upon his chin he wore a tuft of fine, but neglected black hair ; his nose presented the appearance of having been completely crushed by a blow from some dull weapon—a club, perhaps—and succeeded in giving to his long, almond-shaped black eyes, with their heavy, drooping lids, a most villainous expression. He wore a common worsted comforter about his neck, in lieu of a cravat, the ends of which were thrust into the breast of his vest ; and a close observer might have easily discovered in the pocket of his coat a very small and very brilliant dark lantern, technically called a "dark-ey." And there he stood—this human-formed devil—chewing the stump of a cigar, the burnt end of which was distilling the moisture from his lips, while his eyes, half closed, were fixed vigilantly upon the entrance of the Washington ball-room.

To the reader who has never visited New Orleans, or who never visited it at the time of which I write, a paragraph about this establishment as it then flourished, will not be found uninteresting, while the old resident of our city will at once discover a picture true in every shade and color to the very life.

The "Salle Washington," or the "Sally Washington," as our steamboat men, and up-country flatboat traders, usually designated this temple of Terpsichore, Mercury, and the devil, stood, and yet stands, in Saint Phillip street, between Royal and Bourbon streets. The building stands gable front, and extends to a depth of nearly two hundred feet. The saloon—at the time my history begins—is on the second floor, extending the entire length of the building, and being about fifty feet wide. The sides of the room were formed into a number of small recesses or alcoves, furnished *with seats and* damask curtains, by which the revellers who sought

a moments' privacy, could shut out the curious gaze of the throng. The room was brilliantly lighted, the orchestra occupying a position against the wall nearest Royal street, and about midway between the front entrance and the gambling saloon, which traversed the entire width of the building at the rear of the grand saloon.

Immediately within the great corridor in front, on the ground floor, a room was fitted up with boxes, each of which was numbered, and large enough to contain the hat, overcoat, and cane of the male visitors; and in this room, also, were received, for safe keeping, the various instruments of death, in the shape of Bowie knives, dirks, pistols, and slung-shots, that the patrons of "Sally Washington" generally carried in "self-defence."

The reader must understand, that by the regulations of this refined establishment, gentlemen were not permitted to enter the ball either with hat or weapons, hence the room of deposits spoken of; and the better to secure the strict observance of this rule, two officers were stationed on the platform at the top of the first flight of stairs leading to the grand saloon, whose business it was to rigidly search every man and boy (for boys were admitted) who presented himself for admission. The "ladies"—who always came unattended—had a separate entrance in the front of the building, and *they* were not searched. The price of admission for gentlemen was two dollars; ladies were admitted free of charge. In the gaming saloon, at the rear of the ball-room, "craps" and and "rouge et noir" were the charms for recreation to the tired waltzers; and here would assemble pimps, pickpockets, bullies, butchers, boatmen, broken gamblers, *gentlemen*, and beardless boys—each accompanied by a fair partner—to try fortune at one game or the other, and perhaps at both.

Immediately below this room, the supper-rooms were situated, the entrance to which was from the gaming saloon by a narrow flight of stairs. These *supper-rooms* were about eight by ten feet

in size, with ample accommodation for every species of gaiety and amusement In the centre of this area, was one large room in which the curious visitor and the boldest habitués of the place would take their refreshment, which, it must be admitted, was always of the richest, and, of course, most costly description. The drinking saloon was immediately over the main front entrance overlooking the balcony of the second story of the building.

Now, although I have shown the impossibility of any man entering these unhallowed precincts with his murderous arms upon his person, I feel it to be my duty as a true historian, to show how the city ordinance on this subject was constantly evaded. Most of the wretched, painted women who frequented this place, had a lover or a keeper. The distinction of these terms must be well understood. The woman's keeper is some foolish man, who spends his money, his health, and reputation, to support a woman who has charmed him, and who he is absurd enough to think remains honest toward him. The woman's lover, on the other hand, is one whom *she* keeps and supplies with a portion of her gains from others. It requires but little acuteness for the reader to discover that the unprincipled wretches who constitute this last class of attachés are fit for the blackest crimes in the catalogue of evil. Well, the women—by arrangement with their lovers—would conceal a large, murderous knife or dirk in their stocking next to the skin, or a pistol hanging by a loop beneath their underskirts, so as to entirely elude the vigilance of the door-keepers; and being once in their dressing-room, it became an easy matter to unpack the instruments of death, and walk boldly into the ball-room with them in their hands, merely concealed beneath the convenient domino, and, in one of the recesses before spoken of, to place them in the possession of their brutal masters.

It must be remembered they were mask and fancy dress balls; consequently, every facility was afforded for the successful operations of the thieves and assassins with whom the saloons abounded.

It must not be supposed that this gaudy, infamous temple of depravity received its support from the vagabonds who were its constant visitors—far better for many an aching heart and ruined hope, that it had been so; but the ingenuous sailor, fresh from a long voyage, was lured thither by the human vampires who acted as pimps and spies for the enterprising proprietors. Then the steamboat men—and their name is legion in this city—would go there, some to meet their mistresses—some to see the "sport"—some to gamble away their honest earnings, and some actually to enjoy a dance, with big boots and an overcoat on, with some beautiful siren for a partner. And then the farmers, traders, and drovers, from the granaries and stock-farms of the great and growing West, would go—generally the first time for novelty, but seldom leaving it without having suffered by its damnable fascinations and influences. And last, though not the least in numbers, judges, lawyers, doctors, merchants and their clerks, would fill to repletion the congregation of this tabernacle, in which service ended at 3 o'clock A.M., by virtue of the city ordinance that granted license for the performance.

The female visitors of the Washington ball were the public women of the city, the kept mistresses, and in many instances wives; some of them urged by too well founded jealousy to detect their faithless husbands in the midst of their orgies—some in hope of saving their husbands from degradation and despair by mild and touching persuasion, and some to sacrifice, for the first time, their purity to the demon of poverty—wretched poverty, into which they had been plunged by the brutal desertion, or more brutal drunkenness and oppression of husbands, who, at the sacred altar, had sworn to love and cherish them forever.

This is no romance. How far want and despair may influence the actions of some women, the experience and observation of the reader will doubtless answer; but that hundreds have been led on step by step, to *lose themselves* in this gilded temple of Vice,

by the goad of destitution and the unnatural despair and recklessness of blasted hopes and withered affections, the records of our criminal courts and of the coroner's office, can too truly attest.

Nor have those wives, who, prompted by jealous rage alone, to visit this saloon, always escaped unscathed from the dangerous flood into which they had trusted themselves.

They have been recognized beneath the mask and domino, by some profligate friend of the husband, and either most grossly insulted, or what is far worse, compelled to surrender their virtue to avoid the shame and degradation of an instant public exposure with all its horrible consequences. How many pure hearts have strayed into the ball-room, and never recovered from the poison of its atmosphere! How many animated spirits have wandered forth from the intoxication of the waltz, and hot drink, in anticipation of the caresses of some fallen angel, and have never returned to gladden the anxious hearts of dearest kindred! How many hands yet moist with the life blood of some victim, have grasped the dice-box to trade boisterously upon the wages of murder, will never be known until the last Seal shall be raised, and deeds done in the flesh shall be displayed in burning characters upon the record of the damned!

Such was the "Washington Ball" establishment at the commencement of our history. But who was Drowsy Peter, the citizen whom I left standing under the shed in St. Philip street, with a "darkey" in his pocket, and his eyes fixed so vigilantly the entrance to the Washington Ball? you shall learn:

Pedro Nuñez Padilla—or Drowsy Peter, as he was called by his associates—was of Spanish parentage, though born in Genoa. When, or how he came to New Orleans, never was precisely known. Some said he came as cabin-boy in a vessel from Marseilles—others, that his foreign birth and parentage were all a sham, and that he was born at Barrataria, and parented by a Spaniard who had served with the celebrated Lafitte; but by far

the greater number of those who enjoyed this gentleman's acquaintance, were of the opinion that he was running a cargo of slaves into Cuba, and being chased off by an armed vessel, had managed to escape in a fog, to find himself and his schooner stranded near to Barrataria bay, where he in his turn was plundered of his live stock by the land and water pirates of that vicinity, being only too glad to purchase his exemption from our laws against the slave-trade, by surrendering to the unprincipled wreckers almost the entire stock of poor barbarous negroes, on the price of whom he had anticipated the realization of a fortune. Peter was evidently a sailor, or had been in his day, and from the occasional flashes of intellectuality that would sometimes gleam through the rude darkness of his manner and habits, the keen observer might have detected a mind vastly in advance of its possessor. In the beginning of the chapter I gave you an outline of his appearance, and it is only necessary to add, that he was about fifty years of age on the night of his introduction here. Now the identical time of Peter's coming to that shed, and all the particulars touching his expedition and how it succeeded, will be faithfully narrated in the next chapter; and very many who read it will wonder much, and tremble while they read.

CHAPTER II.

"DROWSY PETER" AND "LUCRETIA."

I HAVE said it was Christmas Eve. It was almost ten o'clock, and Peter had been at his post—for he certainly was on the watch—since eight; and as the time wore heavily away, some slight symptoms of impatience began to manifest themselves, for the gentleman would occasionally twitch his mouth, compress his lips, open his lizard-like eyes, and let slip a muttered curse or two, in strict confidence with himself, as he noticed many entering the vestibule of the hall without being able to distinguish the particular person whom he appeared to be watching or waiting for.

At length the clock struck ten. He listened attentively and passively until the tenth stroke chimed upon his ear, when he gave a sudden and violent start as if he had been stabbed to the heart. Peter had evidently lost an hour. It was ten, while he thought the clock was striking nine. Recovering at once from the start the hour had produced, he drew a large knife from his coat, withdrawing the skinny lids entirely from his eyes, and with the grin of a devil displaying a set of the whitest teeth regularly set in his jaws, he said: "D—— her! if she fails, I'll rip the craven Greek heart from her bosom." Having delivered himself of this gentle intention in the event of somebody's failing to do something, he restored the knife to its hiding-place at the moment *a coach* dashed up to the entrance of the ball-room, and a female

enshrouded in a black satin domino and mask, with a crimson cape pointed with black satin, alighted and passed swiftly into the vestibule, where she was immediately lost to sight. But rapid as her motions had been, the apparition had not escaped the jealous observation of Drowsy Peter, who smote himself lustily on the left breast, and with a gleam of satisfaction playing over his savage features, he said—"Ha, my would-be lady, you are there at last. I thought you would not dare to brave my threat of exposure. No, no; that young Mortimer, or Monthemar, has entwined himself too closely about your heart. You could not bear to fall from his honorable love to the condition of Slavery. Aye, Slavery! are you not my slave?—and oh how richly will I make you repay me for the graces I have bestowed upon your clear and subtle mind! We shall see, we shall see. To-night, you only begin to serve me—your service will expire when my hatred to you and your accursed race shall be extinguished by satisfied vengeance."

This was the first speech I ever heard Peter make (authors always hear what their characters say), and I must confess, his language in this instance impressed me with the belief—although I knew him to be a most execrable villain, who looked his character to a charm—that he had tasted refinement and education, and had known far different circumstances to those under which I have introduced him to you. Pedro Padilla's nickname was only applicable to the habitual expression of his eyes. You will presently discover that Pedro was not drowsy at all. Another half hour passed, and then the same mask and domino descended to the door, and in an instant was seated in the same coach that had brought her there. Down poured the rain, away dashed the horses, smoking through the mist, unconscious of the fact that they were carrying an outside rider in the person of Peter, who had seated himself on the foot-board of the coach with an intention best known to himself. After a furious drive of about ten minutes, through the muddy and badly lighted streets, the coach

drew up at the door of a house on Esplanade street near Rampart, and before the driver could dismount, Peter had slipped from his seat and disappeared instantly in the deep gloom of the night.

The door-bell was rung, the mask alighted from the coach, and in an instant was within the house. The next moment, a negress thrust her head outside the door, and told the coachman to "wait—wait a little." "Aye, aye!" said Jehu, "I know all about it," and the closing door banished the only ray of light that had struggled amidst the fogs for a moment in this vicinity, on the eve of Christmas.

But my business is to record what took place inside of the house.

It was small; but the little parlor was comfortable, into which the domino had been shown, and where she was now seated in a large cushioned chair, before the coal fire that burned briskly in the grate, casting a red, uncertain, and gloomy light about the room.

The furniture was dark, old-fashioned, and heavy. One foot of the mask was raised upon the fender, the other was on the floor, and kept up a nervous tattoo, which, by the by, was the only evidence of life about the figure, so fixedly did she gaze in the fire.

After the lapse of ten minutes, the noise of an opening door was heard. She raised her head, and then sprang to her feet, as Peter entered the room bearing in his hand a large silver branch candlestick containing two lighted wax candles. But all the coarseness and vulgarity had disappeared, and Peter stood before her with nothing villainous about him but his face.

Said Peter, placing the light upon a marble table, "Ah, my charming Lucretia!"

"Padilla!" said the lady violently, clasping her right hand upon her bosom, extending the left toward him menacingly, while

her lips were firmly compressed, and her face rendered ghastly by the fierce blaze of light that shot forth from her eyes. Her attitude was grand and imposing, and not without effect upon Peter, who, after gazing in her eyes a moment, his lips twitching with suppressed emotion of some kind, bowed gracefully, and motioned her to be seated, then seated himself at a respectful distance; and while they sit there, silently regarding each other, as if to gather strength for the interview, I will introduce to your eyes, Lucretia—my Lucretia—my heroine, the wonderful beauty of whose character can only be known when the last page of her history shall be finished.

Lucretia Padilla (she bore the monster's name) was about twenty-two years of age—above the common height of women—elegantly formed, and rounded into perfect womanly beauty; her complexion was dark but clear, exhibiting none of that peculiar tinge which betrays the presence of African blood in the crossed Caucasian. Her hair and eyes were of the deepest black, and her face was the most perfect model of Grecian beauty—chin, lips, nose, brow, ears, eyelashes, and dimples, all singly beautiful, were so harmoniously blended, that Michael Angelo—could he have seen her—would have wept tears of gratitude to God, for the chance of transmitting her chaste and classic loveliness to future ages.

There she sat, motionless, but firm in the purpose she seemed intent upon.

"Lucretia, you give me but a sorry welcome after an absence of ten years. Gratitude, if not duty, entitled me some show of kindness," said Peter.

"Gratitude! duty! why should I be grateful to you? What duty do I owe Pedro Nuñez Padilla? a monster confessed—a violator of all laws, even of confidence and hospitality—you have returned hither with the design of a fiend, to blast and wither up the life of one already too deeply wronged by your unscrupulous

villainy. I have this night yielded to your base lying, and unmanly threat—have this night suffered the pollution of that infamous ball-room, and am enduring your loathsome presence now, not because I feel myself to be the slave of your will, but because I would not have the wrath of your savage heart burst upon me, your victim, before we met alone. We *are* met, and we will part. And *when* we part, I'll hurl defiance in your teeth and pledge myself to Heaven as your eternal and implacable foe."

"Lucretia"——

"Beware of me, Padilla;" she continued, "the darkness of your soul, as shown to me, a child, has been deeply and attentively studied as that child grew to her present estate. It was study that taught me how to curse; for I have cursed the hour and the chance that gave you power over my being."

"Lucretia, I must be listened to, and with attention," said Peter, "and I again tell you, that gratitude alone should have secured to me a more gracious welcome than your ladyship has accorded."

"Ladyship me no more, you incarnate devil! I—Lucretia, the daughter of yet unknown parents—the orphan child, by fate cast within the poison halo of your accursed influence and power, here this night will break the thralldom of your infamy, proclaim it to the world, and boldly assert her wrongs, her suffering, and her emancipation from your vile, treacherous usurpation of power."

When Lucretia had spoken, the face of Peter was very livid, either from rage or fear, and he was not a nervous man; beside, his right hand wandered mechanically toward the left breast pocket of his coat, as if he were feeling for something which he either did not find or did not choose to exhibit just then.

To all appearances, Lucretia would have been more safe in any other man's company on that Christmas Eve; but neither his desperate visage, nor the mechanical evolutions of his right hand

seemed to move her from the part she was playing with so much determination. She was firm, and did not quiver in a single muscle. Perhaps her firmness caused Peter to reflect a little, and possibly to change his original purpose. However, he soon became, to all appearances, perfectly calm again, and a smile—such a one as only Pedro Padilla could invoke—crept lazily over his repulsive features, and he said:

"Lucretia, listen to me patiently for a few moments, and then you may end this interview as soon as you please."

She remained perfectly passive, which being favorably construed by Peter, he proceeded thus:

"From the earliest moment in your life, you regarded yourself as a slave, and me as your master."

She slightly shuddered.

"I nursed you and fondled you as if you had been my child."

She involuntarily started back in her seat.

"When time began to unfold to my jealous vigilance the quickness of your mind and the extraordinary beauty of your person, I withdrew you from the care of the old quadroon who had acted as your nurse, and placed you in the care of a respectable family as my adopted child."

"You did," said Lucretia, interrupting him, "and by that act gave to me and the world the first gleam of the long-hidden truth, that I was of no bondwoman born—that I was free—free! A free white girl who had been basely robbed of her own identity—stolen from her parents, perhaps, to answer some foul design of yours, darker than the shadow of despair."

"Shall I proceed, or have you any further interruption to offer?" said Peter.

She slightly bowed, and he proceeded thus:

"At an early age you commenced to acquire music, both instrumental and vocal, for which your natural taste and fine contralto voice so eminently fitted you, while the mysteries of the

French, Spanish, and Italian languages most readily unfolded themselves to the untiring energy of your mind; and at the age of twelve years, I left you, a woman in education and the accomplishments demanded by society, although a child in age"——

Once more Lucretia spoke, and threw in the following little remembrancer:

"Yes, a child in age, but not so tender as to be secure from the revolting importunities of the villain who had so long watched her ripening form and character."

"Still impatient and violent," said Peter. "But to proceed. I left you at the age of twelve years, and for your exclusive benefit, I left a seven years' annuity of four hundred dollars per year, collectable by your then guardians, with instructions to finish your education in a manner to enable you to fill any appropriate position to gain your own living from the moment you should attain your nineteenth year; and in addition to this annuity, your board and clothing had been arranged for. Well! I left you, believing I would never return; for at that moment your resemblance to your mother, and some spark of a once fierce passion for her, rekindling in my bosom, I felt something like pity for *Ephigenia* and her child."

At these words, he dropped his head upon his hand, and shaded his skinny brow, while a deep glow suffused the entire face of Lucretia, and she trembled violently; but it was with wonder at the language she had just listened to. Her mother's name was Ephigenia, then, and the polished monster before her had once loved that mother whom she had never known. What a world of thought flashed through her mind in that moment! Was Padilla about to declare her parentage, and do tardy justice to those who had been so deeply wronged during so many years? We shall see. The villain then resumed thus:

"I crossed the ocean again, but could find no resting-place for my ever active, though weary mind. At length I sought the

Grecian Archipelago to look once more on the scenes—in other days—of joys and ecstasies; for in those other days I was unstained by crime, while the fierce and evil passions that possessed me lay slumbering in their dark cells. In one of the islands—Scio, I think—I met your father"——

At these words, he placed the elbow of his left arm on the marble table, resting his chin upon his hand, and gazed, with his eyes suddenly opened to their widest limit, in the eyes of Lucretia, who colored deeply with some strange emotion, while Padilla's face and lips became gradually to be the color of a light-grey mouse or rat.

For more than a minute thus they regarded each other—he perfectly passive, she trembling most violently.

"Well, go on," said Lucretia.

"I slew him," said Padilla.

"Oh, murderer!" said Lucretia, covering her face with her hands, and dropping her head upon the table.

She remained in that position some moments, and when she *did* raise her head toward Padilla, there he sat, with the same shade upon his features—in the same attitude—still gazing upon her with that indescribable expression of mingled ferocity, revenge, jealousy, hatred, and determination.

So inwardly moved did he seem to be at his own revelation, that his fierce, cold, glassy orbs had not even moved, though the pupil had dilated to double its ordinary size.

Lucretia was speechless with horror and amazement; for although she had never known a father, nor, in fact, had ever before heard Padilla speak of him, yet she was momentarily paralyzed by what she had heard, and in finding herself tête-à-tête with her father's destroyer. She seemed to have lost all power of volition. Her eyes were fixed upon Padilla almost vacantly, so intense was the feeling that possessed her. Presently, her bosom began to swell and heave—the lids of her eyes to quiver,

while a spasmodic twitching of her beautiful fingers betokened a gradual recovery from the deathlike condition into which he had been plunged by these strange and very unexpected disclosures.

She revived, and, in a faint, low, husky voice, said:

"Why did you slay my father?" And at the breathing of that sacred name, her eyes regained their natural appearance; a shower of tears gushed from their surcharged fountains, and she wept like a child in sorrow.

Said Padilla, speaking in reply—"Listen to me Lucretia, and you will learn your history and mine to this very night. When I was young, ere many crimes and trying vicissitudes had distorted and crushed my features, my feelings, and my fresh heart, I saw and loved your mother, then a girl younger than yourself. I, too, was young, rich, and of a noble family in Arragon. I told my passion to her father, and had leave to woo and win his Ephigenia if I could. To facilitate my suit and win his daughter from fancies and affections formed in girlhood—as most girls form them—your grandfather, though of a noble Grecian family, was induced to leave his native land, and with his entire family, to settle in Arragon. There, with all the ardor of a wild, reckless spirit, infatuated by your mother's matchless beauty, I urged my suit successfully—I thought. Our marriage day was fixed and the guests were invited; when, be you the judge of my feelings, on the third morning previous to the nuptial day, your mother—Ephigenia—my Ephigenia—had eloped with the young Marquis of Calatrava, a noble Castilian, who was just then dispatched on a secret diplomatic mission to the Court of Charles X. Their marriage had been secretly solemnized in the chapel attached to the palace of the Duke de Ancantarra, a cousin of the marquis, your father. My despair lasted no longer than the day. The spirit of revenge took possession of my heart, and drove every feeling of humanity from my bosom. I started in pursuit to *France,* and taking a miserable lateen rigged vessel at the near-

est port, put to sea and had the mortification of being driven, by a furious gale of wind, upon the coast of Barbary, where our bark was dashed to pieces, and only two besides myself were saved—and for what, do you suppose?—to be enslaved by the accursed Morescoes, into whose hands he had fallen. We were taken into the interior, and notwithstanding I made known to those savages my name and condition in life, was subjected to the most servile employment, and lashed upon my naked back and limbs until the coarse white tunic that I wore was dyed with the crimson of my veins.

"This usage gave birth to new furies in my breast, and as each fresh lash extracted a groan from me, that groan was heavy with a new vow for vengeance against the marquis and your mother. For eighteen long months I bore my captivity. At the expiration of that time I escaped on board of an armed French vessel becalmed upon the coast, and was carried to Marseilles—thence I proceeded to Spain—to my native Arragon, a haggard, lacerated wretch, to find that all hope of my being yet living had long since been abandoned by my family. Still I was young, and time and my increasing thirst for vengeance on the destroyers of my earthly hopes and happiness, soon restored me to health. I learned that the marquis and his wife were at Calatrava Castle in Castile, so thither I repaired at once. I soon found the objects of my intense hatred, and you, Lucretia, an infant but a few months old. The very sight of their happiness centred in this new pledge of their mutual love, drove me to madness, and in my frenzy I resolved to steal the child, and rear it as my slave in the island of Cuba, until such time as you should be debauched first by me, your master, then by others, and so perfectly debased and demoralized as to be loathsome to yourself, and then restore you with the proofs of your identity and horrible degradation, to the authors of your being and my wretchedness."

At this point of Peter's narrative, the whole expression of

Lucretia's face changed. Her eyes became painfully large and brilliant—her nostrils were distended and she breathed thickly through them. Her lips were firmly compressed, a pale livid line was distinctly drawn round their outside edge—the veins on her forehead distended the even polish of her peerless brow, and the muscles of her graceful neck were swollen and stretched to their utmost tension.

Beware, Peter! you are dealing with a spirit as resolute as your own—a spirit writhing in the memory of her deep wrongs at your hands: but she spoke not, and Peter proceeded thus:

"In the main part of my design I succeeded. I did steal you, but was discovered to be the thief; and although I made good my escape with you from Spain to France under the assumed name of Padilla, I was soon pursued by a royal edict, branding me with infamy; offering a reward for me dead or living—my name erased from the tablets of Spanish nobility, my property confiscated, and my very title razed from the proud pedestal on which it had stood since the days of the great Alonzo.

"All this but added fury to my hate, and I would have strangled you had it not been for my keen appetite for a more perfect vengeance.

"To be brief—for the night is rapidly waning—I landed in Havana, and found myself compelled to seek employment, all my money being the product of such jewels as I wore at the time of my flight from Spain. My first employment was as supercargo of an African trader, or in other words, a slaver, fitted out in the United States, and cleared from Havana for the west coast. The trip was perfectly successful, and I made large gains. I went again and again with perfect safety until three years were passed.

"During this time I was rapidly becoming a practical navigator, and you were becoming a beautiful girl. The quadroon family in which you were lodged, knew you only as the child of a favorite slave of mine, who had died in your early infancy, and

you had been sedulously taught so to regard yourself. Your companions even then were slave children, and you were permitted to make but a little better display in your appearance than they did. Your first word distinctly spoken was 'Master,' and so completely were you fixed in the servile condition, that I have received a thousand offers and large inducements to sell you; but to part with you then did not suit my purpose.

"At this period I became uneasy for your safety during my absence to Africa, and I resolved to make you the partner of my voyages to doubly assure me of your possession.

"From that time until you were about ten years of age, your home was on the ocean with no other female companion than the old quadroon who had acted as your nurse from the moment I brought you to Havana.

"During that period of seven years, I was your instructor even in music; for as often as I changed vessels I never failed to decorate the cabin to my taste and comfort, and having become owner and master of several vessels, I had only to consult my own wishes. On the last voyage we ever made together I had my face crushed with a handspike in the hands of a mutinous scoundrel, and had only recovered from the effects of that fatal blow when I was seized with the African plague that hung my skin in folds upon my bones—the flesh having all left me.

"I see you shudder—you remember that voyage well. However, we returned to Cuba, and soon after—to suit my purpose—we came hither, and for another two years you were left to your studies and your old companion.

"At this time I was seized with an insatiable desire to visit my native land and the island where I had first seen your mother. In rearing you for my vengeance I had imperceptibly cultivated an attachment for you during the years we had been companions; and then time, sickness and my mutilated face had all conspired to engender a dull insensibility to the past, and the rancor of my

hatred had partially burnt out; and when we parted then—having sent the quadroon back to Cuba and located you with the Depassos—I sincerely believed that my desire for vengeance—at least on you, had expired, and that I was leaving you for ever. But you shall now learn how he, to whom I owe all my wrongs and sufferings—who was the first to drive me into crime—who was the direct cause of all the infamy I have endured—remembered the past between us. As I have told you, I went to Scio; for on my return to Arragon I learned, for the first time, that your mother, Ephigenia, for whom I had lost the world—had died of a broken heart for the loss of her child, and that by her request she had been carried to her native isle, and there entombed. Therefore I went to Scio. I saw many that I remembered, but none who remembered me. Time, accident and villainy had made me a stranger among those very priestly choristers whose ancient temple had given back a thousand echoes to the praises they in song had lifted up to me. I engaged a small villa buried between two hills shut out from prying observation, and there I dwelt in quiet if not in happiness, whence I could wander to the grave of her whom I had so madly loved and so deeply wronged; and thus eight years passed away, my sufferings, if not making me a better man, at least restraining my evil and now remorseful spirit within its solitary home.

"Yes, eight years passed thus, when on a summer eve, as I lay upon the grass at the very jaws of that tomb, the past flashing through my mind with fierce rapidity, I was startled by the sound of music, low, soft and harmonious, flowing from the voices of men. There were five, four of whom were priests and the fifth your father." At this word, Peter's face displayed an expression of malignity that would have done credit to the devil when in a rage. Lucretia slightly contracted her brow, but spoke no words, and Peter continued:

"The veil of night was fast stealing, in grim and lengthened

shadows, on the scene, and the spot I lay upon being partially screened from view, I remained unobserved. The vesper being concluded, the priests departed—as I thought—and left your father there alone with me and the dead. In an instant I sprang to his side, seizing him by the shoulders and whirling him around until my face was turned full toward the last flashes of the retiring sun, hissed, rather then shouted in his ear: 'Villain! do you not know me?' 'Monster!' exclaimed he as he grasped me by the throat: and the death struggle began."

At this point of Peter's narrative, large dewy drops had gathered on the brow of Lucretia, which resembled frozen marble in a dusky light. Her eyes had the fixedness of death in their expression.

There was no sign of pulse or breathing about her except at or toward the extremity of her right arm, which was hidden beneath her domino; and the motion visible there, was, as if the hand belonging to that arm, was in the act of grasping something in a rather nervous manner. But as Lucretia will doubtless show her hand before she parts from Peter, I will bury all surmises and let Peter proceed with his story:

"Your father's strength being much greater than mine, he threw me to the ground and fell heavily upon me; but in my fall, I managed to unsheathe a poignard from the lining of my vest, and in an instant it was buried in his bosom."

Lucretia groaned.

"The yell he uttered was heard by the retiring priests, who, having met a young French nobleman on a visit to the island with your father, hastened to the spot, but not until I had secreted myself in a heavy overhanging vine, whence I unobserved could hear all that passed.

"Your father's story was brief but to the point. He discovered to his young friend the name and person of his enemy—called loudly for vengeance on the murderer of himself and his wife, and expired. That moment *you* became an orphan."

At these words, Peter smiled as he gazed on our heroine, whose fixed features quivered slightly for an instant; and she smiled too, as she returned Peter's look, and Peter evidently thought Lucretia's smile was very expressive, for he immediately dismissed *his* smile and fixed his skinny eyes upon her with a very curious expression, the like of which I do not remember to have ever seen resting on the human face before.

And then he paused too, as if waiting for her lips to resume the rigid character they displayed a few moments before; but her slightly expanded muscles did not again contract, and the smile that certainly had annoyed him, remained exactly where his narrative had fixed it. And Peter resumed:

"Knowing that search would be made for me, I hastened home, and concealing most of my valuable jewels about me, made my way to the port and bribed a fruit-dealer to put to sea at once for the nearest island. We were pursued, and the wind failing us, were taken after I had vainly thrown myself into the sea for the purpose of escaping out of existence.

"We were taken, and I was carried back to Spain as a felon whose life was forfeited to her laws, for crimes committed many years before.

"In Spain I was tried, condemned and branded with hot irons on both shoulders and on my breast, and after having been paraded before the people by the public executioner, was transported back to Scio, to endure the final punishment for the death of your father. My captor was the noble young viscount De Montmorencie spoken of before as your father's friend.

"It was he who procured this branding with hot irons to be done upon me. It was he who taunted me with bitter scoffs when I was fainting with agony. It was he who procured me to transported back to Scio, to be hanged in iron chains to a public gallows until the flesh should drop from my bones.

"But I escaped, thanks to the avarice and treachery of the *dastard* Greeks from whom you sprung.

"In bringing me to Scio for death, they secured my liberty. My jailer knew me and my villa, and by disclosing to him where treasure could be found he released me and we fled together by means of the gold that was the price at once of his perfidy and my security.

"Eventually I made my way to New York, in which city one evening, as I was standing in the doorway of a coffee-house in Park Row, I saw young Montmorencie pass by. I followed him to his hotel and was not long in ascertaining that his business in the United States was his pursuit of me. His search in that city proving fruitless, he started for this city with the view of proceeding to Havana, having already discovered that I had been a slaver from that port. I followed him here like a true bloodhound, swearing never to die contented until his life had satisfied my now unalterable purpose of revenge. Here I assumed the character of a fruitier the better to conceal me, and from the dreamy silence with with which I clothed myself, soon won the appellation of 'Drowsy Peter,' by which name I have been known for the last ten months, during all of which time I have been waiting for a chance to strike the blow I meditate.

"And now of yourself, noble beauty! My Lucretia, do not scowl upon me—you are both noble and beautiful, and if you will but hear me to the end and act wisely, I swear to you I will place in your possession the proofs of your identity."

"First tell," said Lucretia, "how you discovered my abode, since old Mattie the quadroon has for ten years been in Havana and the Depassos are dead."

"Listen then," said Padilla. "When I arrived in the city I went at once to the well remembered cottage in Faubourg Trémé where I had left you, and found strangers there. All the information I could gather was, that about five years since (you must have been seventeen then) old Mr. Depasso had died, and that his widow had not long survived him. Respecting the

handsome dark young lady, they did not know what had really become of her, but they had heard she had gone to be a teacher somewhere, but they could not tell me where. Further inquiries proved fruitless, and for months I took different stands in Royal and St. Charles streets where I thought I must some time see you pass if indeed you were yet in New Orleans, of which fact I never once entertained a doubt. At length my patience was rewarded with success. I saw you pass down Royal street in a private coach, with other ladies in your company. Of course I followed the coach, and all else you know." As Padilla ceased speaking his face resumed its sleepy, listless expression, and was turned slowly toward the different objects in the room.

And Lucretia, too, seemed relieved by this brief pause in the interview. Her eyes were cast upon the carpet. She seemed, by the nervous twitching of her lips and peerless brow, to be actively engaged in thought. At length she raised her head, fixed her eyes on Padilla, and said :

"Padilla, is all that you have but now related, the truth, or is it another monstrous villainy you are preparing ?"

Said he with sudden energy : "I swear"——

"Swear not," said Lucretia interrupting him, "for you have deeply offended Heaven already. Speak ! is it all true ?"

"Every word," said he.

"And you confess," continued Lucretia, slowly, "that your sole object in discovering me was to carry out your revenge by making my murdered father's daughter the instrument to bring that father's warm friend into your power, that you might deal upon him death, and the penalty—so your letter ran—to be inflicted, should that daughter refuse to link herself with her father's assassin to commit another murder, was, or '*is* to be, her exposure to the world as an impostor and a slave ?"

"Precisely," said Padilla with as much sang froid as a Frenchman will take take snuff from any box presented.

"Why, you monstrous villain, yet shallow fool!" said our heroine. "And do you think so poorly of the injured girl before you, as to believe her capable of participating in a murder to save herself from the exposure you dream of, even if you had the power to make it? Have you forgotten that you have confessed my noble birth and parentage, and that a breath from me will cast you into that despair which surely awaits you? Murderer! Miscreant! fly while yet the chance is left; for by the dear memory of those parents whose soft caresses I have never known, I declare I will denounce you ere noon to-morrow. I am now content; I know who my parents were, and where their friends and relations can be found. My face, which you admit is a strong likeness to my injured mother's, will prove my declarations to be true. You are foiled, monster, in your disgusting villainy. Fly! wretch, or prepare yourself for the doom you merit, on the morrow."

As she ceased speaking, she rose from her chair and stood erect before Padilla, proud scorn curling her classic lips, and hallowed purity darting from her flashing eyes.

"Impudent slave," said Padilla, recovering a little from his surprise at the turn events had taken, "I have the evidences of your servile condition."

"Liar!" she exclaimed, "you dare not breathe your name beyond these walls, much less to charge me as you threaten. I despise—I defy you. Who waits there? Open the door—I would denounce a murderer."

With the speed of a panther darting upon its prey, Peter drew a knife from his bosom, and in a fury that rendered him hideous, he sprang toward her. But rapid as all his motions had been, she instantly detected his design and quick as thought unmasked a goodly Derringer, presented it with a firm aim at the villain, pulled the trigger, and—the cap snapped only; but he staggered

back appalled, while at the same instant a blow from a sturdy fist upon his broken nose felled him to the floor as Lucretia dropped insensible in the arms of the negress who had opened the door when she entered the house.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW CHARACTERS.

The night and the storm had disappeared together, and the enthusiast might justly have said :

> "Now rosy morn ascends the court of Jove,
> Lifts up her light, and opens day above."

A gentle rap at the chamber door of a splendid mansion in Royal street startled the inmate from a heavy and unrefreshing sleep. "Come in," said the occupant of the chamber and bed—for the speaker was yet in the bed—"come in, Nanny, for I have much to say to you," and while she (it was a woman) was speaking, an ebony-faced girl, about twenty years of age, entered the chamber with all the mysterious care and impatience of a favorite servant, weighed down by the bigness of some secret too hot to be carried long.

"Oh, Miss Chreechy," said the negress, "I'se been on de jump for dis chance dis hour ; yes, you bes believe I has."

"What's the matter, Nanny ?" said Lucretia, for the occupant of the bed was our heroine—"has anything happened—anything gone wrong—does any one know what time I"——

"Bless my dear Miss Chreechy, not a soul knows nuffin no how but dis nigger. I took de job to tend door from Ole Pete, after I make him fussy on tree hot Christmas punches. I'se de one wot got de letter."

"Letter ! What letter ?" said Lucretia,

"De letter wot was guv to me by the gentlman wot fotch you from de masseriade ball. And de—Lord! Miss Chreechy, I expec you was goine to die—dis chile did; you wos clean done fainted in de coach, and 'twas as much as poor Nanny could do to bring Miss Chreechy up to dis blessed room, and take off her dress. And den you went right straight to sleep—you did, yes indeed."

"And did the gentleman come in the house, or did he leave me at the door with you?" said Lucretia.

"He leff you in dis chile's arms, at de door," said the faithful Nanny, "an he guv me dis letter for nobody but you, Miss Chreechy; so I bring it rite straight, me," and as she finished speaking she produced the letter, which Lucretia studied with attention.

The contents were as follows:

NEW ORLEANS, *Christmas Eve*, 18—

MADEMOISELLE LUCRETIA:

Fear nothing! Your secret and the secret of our interview is safe, there being but one witness besides the old slave woman, and she knows nothing of you. The other witness is rather a dangerous character, who probably never before in his life did a good timely action.

It was he who struck me down at the moment when my frenzy might have driven me to be your murderer. It is better as it is, perhaps. You remained in a swoon some time, during which, this fellow upbraided me with deceiving him by only producing a woman, when he had calculated to find a man to knock on the head; and insisted that whoever you were, you should be immediately taken home, which was done, but not without this ruffian mounting the coach-box to see, as he said, fair play between us.

He is a creature of mine, and after you had been delivered to the servant Nanny, I managed to dismiss him for the night with some frivolous reason for our quarrel, he having assured me that he had heard nothing of it. I have my reasons for believing him. but at the same time 'tis best to be on your guard against a surprise; for it is just possible he may want to extort money, should he find means to communicate with you.

As to ourselves, I presume you will agree that prudence on our part dictates that what is past should be permitted to slumber. I may find means

to accomplish my wishes without your assistance; in that event, I will leave you free from further molestation, though without the evidence of your identity, as a punishment for your design upon my life. But should circumstances again render your services essential to my plans, you *shall* give them to me or embrace the alternative, which you well know is your destruction, if it cost my life to effect it.

I trust, that after you have carefully perused this note, and calmly reflected over its contents, that judgment at least will determine you to agree with PADILLA.

P. S.—Be wise! You are young, and may yet command a lifetime of happiness. P.

While reading this agreeable letter, Lucretia was sitting in her bed, and Nanny stood leaning against a toilet bureau. No word, nor even an audible sigh, escaped either bosom. Lucretia was pale, and a keen observer might have detected that same twitching at the corner of her beautiful mouth that I have before spoken of, but no other emotion was visible. She refolded the letter, called Nanny to lay it on the bureau, and with a languid smile said:

"Nanny, you are a good, kind-hearted girl, and I should be deeply afflicted were I to be compelled to part with you." Nanny looked grave, and our heroine continued, as she sprang lightly from her bed, "Come! help me dress, and before dinner I'll tell you all about my sickness last night."

This sentence was delivered with such a winning, smiling grace, that Nanny's white, even teeth once more appeared, and she moved with alacrity to obey.

It was late, but being Christmas morning, and the entire household, from their previous night's amusements, having indulged in an extra hour's sleep, Lucretia was the first to enter the breakfast-room, where she seated herself near a heavily-curtained window, from which she could see whole troops of children already passing along, adorned in the various harness from the inexhaus-

tible store-house of our thrice blessed Santa Claus. As she continued to look, a heavenly smile stole over her saddening features, and her eyes began to glisten with tears. Dear, dear Lucretia, what are you thinking of? Is it the letter you have been reading, or its atrocious author? Or is it the gleeful happiness of those little ones whose very lips seem ruddy with kisses new laid upon them by a tender mother's love? Yes, it is that thought which brings such exquisite sorrow to your bosom. But grieve on, weep on, dream on—

> "The day at last will break,
> And find you but to happiness awake."

An explanation is here necessary, that the reader may at once know how our heroine came to be located in the position we find her occupying. In her interview with Padilla, you learn that at the age of twelve years she was left by him in the family of one Louis Depasso, with means to complete her education; and with these good people she remained, leading a most industrious and exemplary life, until she attained her eighteenth year, when her kind protectors died within a short time of each other, and it so became necessary for her to make a start in the world alone.

By her energy she had become a most exquisite songstress and performer on the harp, piano, and guitar—an instrument she had mastered for the sole purpose of indulging her fancy for music during her hours of solitude.

As a French, Spanish and Italian scholar, few could surpass her; with these qualifications, a most beautiful person and winning manners, she was not long in obtaining the situation of private instructress to the daughters of Leaumont Belleville, a French refugee from the wrath of Louis Philippe, and then an adopted citizen of the United States, as also one of the most prominent and wealthy citizens of the Crescent City.

The young ladies Belleville, at the time Lucretia entered the family, were twelve and fourteen years old—the former named Elise, and the elder, Margaret. It was easier for Lucretia to master the affections of this amiable family than to impart the science of music and the languages to her pupils, and although their progress had not been of the most flattering description, they had made all the amends in their power for their inattention to study by heaping all their confidence and affection upon their, perhaps, too indulgent instructress.

And thus nearly five years had passed happily away, bringing the pupils to woman's estate and Lucretia to be regarded as one of the family.

About six months previous to the opening of these scenes, there arrived from France a young man named Henry Monthemar, who had brought letters of introduction to Leaumont Belleville, of so strong a character that he was at once received in the family with sentiments of respect and intimacy.

Monthemar was about thirty; his figure and carriage were graceful, though very muscular. His general appearance was at at once striking and pleasing; for while his short upper lip, square, massive chin, and swarthy, curved mouth, seemed to denote firmness and decision of character, not altogether free from hauteur, his broad, fair brow, around which clustered a short, curly crop of bright chestnut hair, and his clear, bright grey eyes, shaded by long, dark, silky lashes, at once told you he was a man whom a man could trust and a woman love, without ever having cause to regret such confidence.

Monthemar had not long been intimate with the Bellevilles ere the charming graces of Lucretia began to stir his bosom with emotions hitherto unknown to him. He thought he loved her, but would not trust himself to act upon his thought until a little more time should convince him he had not misunderstood his own heart. He simply knew the capacity she occupied on entering

the family, but he had also been well assured by Belleville that he regarded her now as if she were indeed his daughter.

The attentions of Monthemar, who was a natural gentleman, had been of such an open, frank and graceful character to all three of the young ladies, and without any effort, that the keenest observer could not have discovered the most delicate shade of preference; but the magic influence he was momentarily yielding to, had long since been communicated to the heart of Lucretia, by that wondrous magnetism which never fails to illumine a kindred heart with the first bright ray of love.

Lucretia felt that she was loved by Monthemar, and yet she could not single out the look, the act or word on which she could base her conclusions. The consciousness of this growing affection on the part of Monthemar, although far from being displeasing to our heroine, nevertheless gave her some uneasiness, lest, when Monthemar should be no longer able to conceal the true state of his feelings, the Bellevilles might possibly think she had employed some unseemly artifice to win his serious attentions from either Elise or Margaret; for the family of Monthemar belonged to the ancient noblesse of France, and an alliance with one of the Misses Belleville—a name and family originally no less illustrious than that of Monthemar—seemed to Lucretia an event not unwished for, at least by her present protector. And it was thus matters stood in the Belleville family on this Christmas morning.

Lucretia seemed completely absorbed by her own thoughts. The passing troops of young Christmas revellers no longer attracted her eye, which was now downcast, and almost completely shaded by the long silken lashes that trembled with the weight of the liquid diamonds that yet glistened in their midst.

So profound was her reverie, she did not notice the entrance of Elise; who stood in the centre of the room, regarding her with the tenderest affection. The joyous and tender-hearted girl saw at once that Lucretia had been weeping, and knowing the

repugnance of the latter to be discovered in her moments of sorrow by M. Belleville—whom Elise momentarily expected to enter this room—she coughed, and rushed forward, as if just entering the parlor, took Lucretia around the neck, and kissed her on the mouth, before she had time to recover her self-possession; exclaiming;

"Oh, Chreechy! you bad creature; to steal away without waiting for this kiss (kissing her again), and a merry Christmas from Elise. You promised I should have the first kiss; and when Nanny told me you had gone to the breakfast room, I ran as fast as possible to prevent Margaret or papa from stealing the first fruits."

Said Lucretia, "My own dear Elise, I fear I can never repay the tenderness you have ever shown me. Come, let me give you back at least one of the presents you have presented me this merry morning;" and the next instant the pupil and monitress were fast folded in each other's arms.

"But how is this, Creechy? you call it a merry morning, and yet, when I entered the room—perhaps it was the shade of the curtains that produced the effect—I thought you were looking sad!"

"It was nothing, Elsie, but a passing thought of my mysterious and solitary existence. I was thinking"——

"I will not hear you talk so. Solitary, indeed! Are pa and Margaret nobody? Am I nobody? and is *somebody else* nobody?"

At this mischievous allusion to Monthemar—for the *somebody else* of Elise was certainly that gentleman—a deep blush rose to the very brow of Lucretia, who, if she did not avert her eyes from those of her companion, certainly had no words to reply immediately, and the light-hearted girl proceeded:

"Ah, ha! my stately queen! the rose becomes you on a frosty morning. Now, do not let me catch you again in a gloomy mood, for if you do, I'll tell—I'll tell"——

"Elise"——

"I'll tell Meg, and we'll tease you into a merry humor."

At that moment the door opened, M. Belleville, with Margaret, entered, and after an affectionate salutation all around, the party seated themselves at breakfast.

It is quite certain that although the reference to Monthemar by Elise was a random shot, it nevertheless had so far disconcerted Lucretia that for some moments she exhibited considerable confusion, at least in her appearance; on observing which, M. Belleville kindly inquired, if his little mischief (meaning Elise) had been teasing her about the various conquests at the ball last night; and Lucretia was not a little relieved by Elise adroitly taking up the conversation, saying:

"No, indeed, pa; I was scolding Chreechy for going to bed so late and rising so early, thereby causing her head to ache and her eyes to look feverish. But do tell us, pa—what have you bought for our Christmas? Have you the presents by you—in your pocket—upstairs? Where are they, pa? We are dying to see them; aint we, Meg?"

Margaret and Lucretia could not restrain their laughter at this characteristic volley from the sunny little sprite; and even M. Belleville's face relaxed from its habitual gravity as he said, smilingly:

"My daughter, which of your questions shall I answer first? I only see one person at the table liable to expire for want of a single answer to a dozen questions in a breath."

Said Elise: "There now, pa, that's the way you always hold me back when you see I am in a hurry."

"But you should not be in such haste, my child."

"I am almost seventeen, pa," said Elise.

Another burst of laughter from Margaret and Lucretia, in which they were joined by M. Belleville, put a stop to the discourse; and Elise, blushing to the the temples, but with a glori-

ous expression of affection, good humor and wickedness upon her face, her head arched to one side, jumped from her seat—ran to the other end of the table, took her father around the neck—completely burying his face in a torrent of blonde ringlets that flowed from her head, vowed she would never release him until all her questions were answered and he should promise not to call her a child any more. As may be supposed, this feat on the part of Elise only increased the mirth of the party. She buried her face in her father's bosom and clung to him with a tenacity that showed a resolution on her part only to quit the contest a conqueror. Sweet Elise! Both girl and woman, yet neither to perfection—just leaving spring—just rushing into summer—unowned by either season and yet a flower of them both, how could she fail with a father like Leaumont Belleville, who loved her almost to idolatry? As soon as he could find breath to speak—for he had never been known to laugh so since the death of his wife which had occurred about ten years before—he said:

"I will, I will Elise—my little woman daughter, I never will"——

"You will and you never will what, pa? Now don't catch me with some shady promise that I cannot understand."

"I promise not to call you child any more, and in answer to your questions, the presents are all in Lucretia's room with your names written on them. Now will you release me?"

"Yes!" said Elise, as she kissed her father and flew out of the room, not daring to look at her sister and our heroine, but making the house ring with her laughter as she bounded up the stairs. As there were to be a few visitors at the house that morning, M. Belleville and the young ladies soon left the breakfast parlor to prepare for their reception; and on reaching her chamber Lucretia was startled to find Elise there, with Padilla's letter in her hand studying the superscription so intently that she did not notice the entrance of Lucretia, who, fearing that Elise had been

reading the letter, that her dreadful secret was at least partly disclosed, turned deathly pale and groaning aloud, staggered to a large chair for support, else she would have fallen to the floor.

The groan startled Elise, who flew to the side of Lucretia, still holding the letter in her hand—and exclaimed in a voice of the deepest anguish—while her beautiful face became the picture of despair:

"Chreechy! dear Chreechy, you are dying. Help, there, Nanny!"—

"Stop!" said Lucretia, faintly; "do not call—it—it is nothing, it will soon pass away. The spasm—it is leaving me—now."

And as she finished speaking, her eyes, opened to their fullest limit, were turned downward slowly, until they became fixed upon that infernal letter which Elise yet held in her hand, unconsciously. Following the gaze of our heroine, Elise was suddenly struck with the idea that this letter contained some matter of deep importance to Lucretia, who, having found her reading the superscription, might have believed she had violated their mutual confidence by reading its contents; and acting upon this thought, Elise raised her eyes to the face of her companion, presented the letter to her, then said in a trembling voice:

"Dear Lucretia, do not—do not believe me to be so base." At these words she burst into tears and sunk at Lucretia's feet upon the carpet. Lucretia took the precaution to close and fasten the door to prevent interruption, and having recovered all her self-possession in a moment, raised poor little Elise from the floor and placed her upon a couch; then seating herself, she took the hand of her darling pupil and companion, saying:

"Elise, dear Elise, do not weep—you would not, I am sure, if you knew how every tear reproaches me for that one bitter thought—the first and only shadow of injustice or unkindness that ever darkened my soul. Speak to me, dearest—say that

you forgive me—me, Lucretia!—*your* Lucretia, as you were wont to call me in our early days of friendship and love."

"Alas! dear Chreechy," said Elise, raising her head and smiling sadly through her tears, "'Tis I who should plead for forgiveness. It is I who am guilty. Oh! pardon me, that I may not hate myself for causing you the bitterness of these few moments."

"Elise! you have heard me speak of the man with whom I was so mysteriously associated in my infancy and youth. Well, recent revelations made by him"——

"By him!" said Elise with a start; "I thought you said he had left this city ten years since, and that you had never heard of him more?"

"He did leave as I told you, but has recently returned hither. This letter is from him, and it refers to infamy, too vile for your fresh, pure imagination to dwell upon." Elise grew pale and trembled. "But," continued Lucretia, "it is infamy of his own, not mine."

"I believe you, dearest, I believe you; but oh! how I begin to tremble for your safety, Chreechy."

"To proceed," said our heroine, "recent revelations made by that monstrous villain to me—for I have seen him—have for the first time shown me the full extent of the wrongs I have endured. But in gloating over the misery he inflicted, he unwittingly placed at my disposal the means of checking him in his mad career of vice. Were you to read this letter, it would fill you with horror and dismay; but hear me, Elise," and she fell gently upon her knees, extending her hands and eyes toward heaven. "Before the hallowed eye of Him who gave himself a willing sacrifice for our salvation—by the majesty of our heavenly Father, his sublime perfectness and truth, I am innocent of crime."

As Lucretia arose from her kneeling position, Elise sprang from the couch on which she had been seated, and taking Lucre

tia's hand in both her own, said: "I believe you, dearest—I believe you. But is there no way to bring that monster to punishment? Oh! that I were a man just for your sake, Chreechy. I would not rest until that scamp had received a full reward for his baseness. Come, now, sweet, don't look sad any more to-day; you know who is coming (with an arch turn of the head), and people will be sure to notice your eyes."

Said Lucretia—"Elise, you are now the mistress of a part of the only secret I have; for my sake guard it as you would my honor. At the proper time I will reveal to you all that Padilla has told me of my history. Until then, let me rest assured of your silence upon the incidents of this morning. Nay, do not speak, love; your soul looks out upon me reproachfully, for exacting so little as your silence. See! all my sadness is gone, and I am your own Chreechy once more."

As she finished speaking, Lucretia passed her arm around the waist of her companion, and smiling sweetly, was leading her from the chamber, when Elise suddenly stopped, exclaiming: "Goodness gracious, Chreechy, I almost forgot what I really came to your room for. Have you forgotten our presents?" She released herself, and running to the table, seized upon three parcels which were quickly untied, displaying a brilliant *gorget* for herself, a *bracelet* for Margaret, and a magnificent *tiara* for Lucretia—all diamonds of the purest water.

"Oh, Chreechy, what beauties these are! How this tiara will sparkle in that raven's wing hair of yours. Let me put it on. I will, I will!—I tell you it's of no use to object—I'll have it on your head this minute if it cost a struggle."

"Elise, dear, not now—to night when the company are gone."

"I tell you I won't mind you—I'll be a bad girl—I won't learn—I won't study, I won't kiss you—I will have it on now, if I pull all your hair down in the attempt." And seizing the delicate and costly trinket from its case, her eyes sparkling with

mischievous mirth, she bounded toward Lucretia, who, finding all opposition unavailing, seated herself—submitted her peerless head to the inestimable fairy, and in an instant her brow was encircled by the gems. Elise continued :

"Oh how glorious you look ! Meg, Meg ! pa, pa ! Nanny ! Meg, come quick, I can't hold her—come quick"—and she struggled hard to prevent Lucretia from removing it from her head, and at that instant M. Belleville, Margaret and the faithful Nanny came rushing in the room with consternation depicted on their faces, so violently had Elise been screaming for them ; but when they saw the now passive Lucretia decorated with the gems, her eyes downcast—the richest crimson mantling her face and neck (for in her struggle with Elise, her beautiful lace cap had fallen on the floor) and her hands pinioned by the "little mischief" who knelt before her, their alarm changed at once to mirth. As then seated, Lucretia was the most enchantingly beautiful woman ever seen. The calm, modest, yet half reproachful expression of her face, contrasted finely with that of the sparkling blonde, whose flaxen ringlets trembled and waved like floss, from the excitement her waywardness had created.

"Oh, Elise !" said Margaret, "you wicked creature, how could you frighten us so ?"

"My dear !" said M. Belleville, "I am quite sure Lucretia will be angry with you for this. You are too inconsiderate, Elise. Just think of your adorning her head with that bauble, and at this hour in the morning. I am quite certain Lucretia has been tricked into this position by you."

"Well, pa, suppose I did ; cannot two sweethearts have a little fun on a Christmas morning ? Now, is she not beautiful ?"—(more crimson in the face of poor Chreechy)—"say she is beautiful, and I'll release her at once !"

"She is beautiful, my dear," said M. Belleville, as he crossed the room to the now liberated Lucretia. Taking her hand and

gently kissing her brow, he continued: "Lucretia, you r give the indelicacy of my compliment—it was the only r saving you from further annoyance. You must pardon c madcap, too, for I do not believe she can remain ser minutes at a time, except when sleeping."

Said Margaret: "Indeed, pa, Elise is not even serio for the other morning, passing her chamber door, I h laughing quite loudly, and on entering the room to l cause of so much mirth at that very early hour, I found l ship asleep and only dreaming of fun."

Said Elise, instantly assuming all the dignified haut queen dowager—"*Miss* Belleville, permit me to obser whatever may be your claims upon me for a feast o during my sublunary moments, the hours I pass in Hea night should be held sacred; and in order to put an e further intrusion, I shall henceforth lock the door of when I go to wander there in dreams.—Ladies!—mons have the honor of wishing you a good morning." An very low obeisance, that for grace and grandeur would h honor to Ann of Austria, she swept from the room wit stateliness of her majesty.

As Elise made her exit, the ladies and M. Belleville gl each other an instant, and then followed a chorus of which endured until Margaret and her father had reac several apartments.

CHAPTER IV.

BILL RANKIN.

New Year's Day was past, and Lucretia had heard no more of our old acquaintance Padilla; still from her knowledge of the man and the intimation conveyed in his notable letter to her, she was in constant dread of some terrible dénoûment that might plunge her into new misery. One evening as Lucretia was seated alone in her chamber where she had retired under the pretence of slight indisposition, but really for the purpose of avoiding young Monthemar, who was expected that evening, Nanny entered very cautiously and without knocking, because, as she said, she was "afeered" some one might hear her; and she "didn't want nobody to hear her no how."

"Well! Nanny, what's the matter now, that you look so mysterious and tread as noiselessly as a snow-flake?"

"Oh, Miss Chreechy, dar is a man round de corner by de gardin gate wot wants to see you dis blessed night—yes."

"A man, Nanny?" said Lucretia, a deadly pallor stealing over her face. "What man is it?—have you ever seen him before?"

"Yes! He is de same big one wot ride behind de coach de night you was brung from de ball, sick."

"And he wishes to see me, Nanny? Good Heaven! what can he want of me. Did he say anything to you?"

"Yes, Miss Chreechy, he did. He say he been waiten dees fou (four) days, jist to tell you somsing, wot he can't rite, so he muss tell it you, you ownsef."

"Does any one know of his being at the back gate, Nanny?"

"No pussen at all, Miss Chreechy. He say he been waiten for a glance of dis nigger all the time. He say he spect you can fotch him in de house kaise it too cold for you to go out in de garden."

"Nanny, do you think you could bring him in the little room where the gentlemen smoke their cigars, without anybody seeing him?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And that you can prevent any of the servants or the young ladies from coming to my room while I speak to this man?" continued Lucretia.

"Yes, indeed."

"Then go, Nanny, and when he is placed, call me, that's a good girl."

And away went Nanny to do the bidding of her idol. Now I suppose that you already know, that this visitor is none other than Mr. William Rankin, or "Buffalo Bill," as his intimate friends style him—the same gentleman referred to by Padilla in that letter. Lucretia, at least, was of that opinion, although she had never heard his name. And as she remembered what Padilla had said, about the probability of this champion making an effort to extort money from her, and believing him to have no other errand on this occasion, she went to a drawer and taking a small purse therefrom, prepared herself—to submit with the best possible grace. In a few moments Nanny returned, saying:

"It's all right, Miss Chreechy;" and the next minute that young lady found herself tête-à-tête with the hero who had probably saved her life by letting his *left* fall heavily on the battered nose of Padilla.

"*Well sir,*" began Lucretia at once, "what is your business

with me?—have you come to demand money for your timely interference on my behalf a few nights since?"

At this salutation, which was delivered in rather an austere manner, Mr. Rankin rose from his seat, glanced at Lucretia, twisted his hat, and said—nothing.

Said Lucretia: "Speak! and say at once how much money I must give you, and then be gone."

Now, as this was spoken with a considerable degree of asperity, it rather increased than diminished the confusion of Mr. Rankin, who reddened up to his eyes, which were fixed on the flowers in the carpet, while he adroitly rolled up his felt hat in the shape of a loaf of bread, but still could not find his tongue.

The man's evident confusion made Lucretia think that perhaps she had mistaken his errand; she immediately regretted having spoken so sharply to him, and said, in a milder tone:

"Have you any letter or message for me?"

The gentleness with which she this time spoke had a most magical effect on the nervous system of Mr. Rankin, for he ceased rolling his hat, and rolled up his eyes to the face of Lucretia with such a comical expression of gratitude for the few kind words she had spoken, that it was with some difficulty she could restrain a smile.

Buffalo Bill thus spoke:

"Why, you see, mam, I was hurt so mortal bad by that suspicion of yourn about my comin' neer to git money from yer, that my heart jumped right up to my throat and cum neer chokin me, and I couldn't speak, mam—indeed I couldn't. But, I'm no thief, mam, nor no beggar neither, though *prehaps*, when you cum to know me, you'll think I've been worse than either. I have much to tell you, mam, about wot is consarnin to you and that black-muzzled dog of a Drowsy Peter, as we call him, but"——

"Of whom are *you speaking?*" said Lucretia, interrupting him.

"Why, who in this blessed world should I be speekin of, but that snake-eyed Piddilly, as you called him on Crissmus Eve?"

"And have you come from Padilla?" said Lucretia.

"Why, yes, I have in one sense, and in another sense, you see, mam, I haint. But if your ladyship will jist set down for a few minits, I'll tell you everything; for you see, mam, wile you stand there, it seems jist as if you was a-goin to order me out before I git this load from my heart." Here Bill slapped himself on the breast, and continued: "For you see, mam, I've got a heart as sure as you're born, but it's bin left to go astray since I was a méer babby."

And here Bill cast down his head again, and seemed to be looking for something in the furthest corners of the room; and he must have received a mite of dust in his eyes at the same time, for just then they appeared to have water in them. Lucretia thought she saw it, and, without speaking, seated herself upon a chair.

In a few moments Bill recovered his confidence and said:

"You see, mam, I aint goin to tell you nothin that aint noose to you; therefore I aint goin to tell you that Piddilly is a willin with a blacker heart than any ace of spades you ever seen; but to come to the pint at once: I've found out the dodging ground of that old nigger wench wot had you in her clutches wen you was nothin but a babby. And that aint all nor half. I've found out that she had charge of some little cloths and some handsom little trinkets wot you had on your precious little ladyship wen Piddilly stole you from the nuss in your father's garden."

At this point, Lucretia started, clasped her hands, and was evidently about to speak, when Bill stopped her thus:

"Now, mam, please don't speak to me, for my blood begins to git warm, and you shall have the whole story as sure as you're born, if you don't git in a stopper on me."

Lucretia remained silent, but with a very eager expression on

her face, her piercing eyes being riveted on Mr. Rankin, who continued :

"You see, mam, Peter—that is, Piddilly—left them things in a handsome box with the old nigger wench wen he took you with him to Affricay for a load of slaves. He told her they was yours, and that they was waluable, and that he was afeerd he would lose 'em or that they would git spiled out to sea.

"Well, you see, mam, the old nigger was always treated well by Piddilly, and he promised her her freedom from time to time, but he always keept puttin it off till he made one more woyage. So you see, mam, the last time he took you to Affricay, the old nigger fell in with some of the free niggers from my city, and they made her believe that if she ever wanted to be free, she had better run for it. And so you see, mam, that she packed up her traps and started for New York, where she now is keepin a candy shop in Orange street, neer to the Five Pints."

Here Bill shook his head in a kind of triumph, and paused for breath, and to listen to any remarks his auditor might have to make.

"Where did you get all this information, and how am I to believe all you tell me, when it is plain you are a creature of that infamous man?" said Lucretia.

"Why you see, mam," said Bill, "as to the fust pint, I got the information from Piddilly himself; and as to the second pint, why you see, mam"—and Bill dropped his head again—"I can't be very much put out even if you do think I'm lying, that's all!"

The gaze of Lucretia was fixed upon the averted face of her visitor, and neither the quick heaving of his bosom nor the glow upon his cheeks escaped her vigilance. Her curiosity was awakened, for the man had spoken of those very proofs of her own identity, for the possession of which she had been sighing for many years. Her wish, that all she had heard was true, coupled

with a strong desire to know more, made her cautious, and she resolved to probe Mr. Rankin to the full depth of his knowledge. She said:

"Why should Padilla tell you secrets of so much importance to myself and his own bad designs against the peace and happiness of a girl who never did him wrong? Give me some reason for his having shown his confidence with one so far beneath him in skill and position in the world. I would like to believe all you tell me—it is my interest alone that makes me hope that all you have said may prove to be the truth; but I have been so deeply wronged—so cruelly deceived by that vile man—that wretch, whose murderous hand made me an orphan, and whose ungodly spirit of revenge would pursue me unto destruction, that I must be convinced of your sincerity and truthfulness before I credit your story. But remember this, I have powerful friends; and if you prove to be—as you would have me regard you—an honest man, here for the sole purpose of unmasking the most infamous of all villains, you will have secured for yourself through life, the most boundless gratitude and a rich reward. Now proceed."

And Mr. Rankin said: "You see, mam, this time your suspicion doesn't hurt me, becaus it's werry right that you should want to know that I ain't no willen like Piddilly, *nairy time*. And if you please, mam, if I am so far beneath him in position in the world as you say, I sleep well at nights when I've got a bed to lay in; and as for skill, why you see, mam, although I can't neether read nor right, I was brot up in the town and trained for the ring since I was nothin but a boy. Now you see, mam, that the sportin men of New York are a right sharp set, and tho none of 'em offered a red cent to help me in the way of school'n, they all helped to teach me how to know men. So you see, mam, that although Piddilly is chock full of skill as you say, there's a heep of Yorksheer on this side of the house, too.

"Now Piddilly said to me, says he, 'Bill! I've got a job for

you. And wen I asked him wot it was, he jist told me the whole thing that I've bin tellin you ; and then says he, 'I want you to go to New York and git them things from that nigger. I'll give you the money to pay expenses, and enough to bribe the wench to give up the things without any trouble. So git ready, Bill,' says he, 'for off you go to-morrow by the way of Mobile.' Now you see, mam, all this took place three days after Crissmiss. I sed I'd go, but I ment to see you before I went, jist to see if you wouldn't let me do you a little service by bringing the things to you insted of givin 'em to that broken-nosed rascal. That's all, mam, and that's jist what brings me here."

Said Lucretia : "But how is it that you are in New Orleans yet ? what has delayed your departure ?"

"Oh," said Bill, "I'll tell you that too. You, see mam, when the next day cum, what does the willen say to me do you think ? Taint no use tryin, for you'd never guess it. Says he, 'Bill ! I'll go to Mobile with you so as to think of anything else I may want you to do. So my gentleman escorted me to Mobile, and would not part with me until I was safely in the mail boat for Stockton ; so you see, mam, I was obleeged to travil clean back to Orleans jist to let you know I was bound to do you a good turn for them few words you spoke to me on that night. Now this is all the truth of it, as sure as I'm Bill Rankin."

"What words did I speak to you on that night ?" said Lucretia.

Said Bill : "Why ! have you forgotten 'em, mam ? Well I havn't ! You said, says you (and you was mortal bad off at the minnit) says you to me—jist as I let Piddilly down with my left—save me if you have the heart of a man ! and then you died right off. So you see, mam, them words sunk right into my breast and struck somethin there that set me to thinken right off. There was you layin on the floor lookin jist as if you was dead—and I thought you was. I turned around to look at Piddilly, but the nigger had carried him into another room, and there was

I alone with my conscience and—and Him," and Bill pointed his hand to the ceiling while his huge head sank upon his deep, broad chest, and his powerful frame shook with emotion.

In a few moments he recovered and thus proceeded in a very husky voice: "I put a sofee cushion under your head, and going to the sideboard, found some water which I sprinkled on your face to see if you was dead for certain; wen, to my joy, you drew a little breath. Then, then, mam, me! me! who had never thought about God in all my life before, fell down upon my knees and prayed to God that I might not live to be a witness of a murder—that you might be spared to life. And then I took a solemn oath that if it was my good luck to carry you back safe to your friends, I would become another kind of a man—that I would quit the employment of that Spanish devil and also quit prize fighten, to ship as a green hand on one of the cotton ships goin' to Liverpool and so try my hand on the ocean for awhile, jist to keep out of bad cumpany if nothin' better. You know all the rest; you recovered and so did Piddilly, and I'm glad of it, for I didn't want even his bad blood upon my hands in that way. I made him bring you home, and left him for the night. The next day I wos lookin out for a ship, wen I meets Piddilly with his snout tied up, and he took me to that same house and told me all about these things, and how he wanted to git 'em and how he didn't want to leave you unwatched for a minnit. Then I seen by his eyes he ment you some mortal mischief, and I took another oath that I would block his game if it cost me a whole life-time of labor; so here I am, mam, ready to do anything you wish."

Bill paused and looked earnestly at Lucretia, who sat buried in reflection. She was so perfectly passive that the giant before her held his breath as if fearful of disturbing her, until the silence became too oppressive for him, when he said half reproachfully:

"Don't you believe me yet, mam? Well, take this letter and read it, and then I know you'll believe me."

He took from an inside breast pocket of his coat, a letter addressed to Gilbert Hays, or Alexander Jackson, police officers in the city of New York. Our heroine knew the writing in a moment. It was Padilla's. She inserted a finger in the fold of the letter, then suddenly paused and regarded Rankin, earnestly, but said nothing. Bill immediately divining the cause of her hesitation, said: "Open it, mam, and read it—yes! read it out to me, so that I may know how far the Drowsy one is ahead of me."

Lucretia opened the letter, its contents were as follows:

GENTLEMEN:

The bearer of this, Wm. Rankin, is my servant, and a very trusty fellow; I have sent him to your city in the hope of recovering an inlaid dressing-case, containing some few articles of a female child's apparel and jewel toys of the finest quality, and of the old Spanish style.

The articles are marked "Ephigenia." The box was stolen from me by a runaway slave woman, in whom I had reposed the greatest trust.

She is now in your city, and my messenger, who is a New Yorker, will conduct you to the place.

I care nothing for the slave, if she restores the property; but if she refuses, I wish her arrested as a common thief, and I will send a requisition from our Governor to bring her back to this city. Should it be necessary, let Rankin, as my agent, make the affidavit for a search warrant.

The things are not worth a hundred dollars in money, but to me they are dearly valuable; and if you succeed in restoring them to my servant, I will acquit me of your diligence and favor by a sight draught of $500. And as an earnest of my sincerity, you will find herein, a check on your Chemical Bank for $100 to the order of either of you.

So now, good sirs, be speedy with the mission, and send me the earliest intelligence of success.

Yours, respectfully,

PEDRO N. PADILLA,

New Orleans, Louisiana.

Lucretia studied the letter over and over again in silence, evidently debating, in her own mind, the propriety of adopting some resolution fraught with great difficulty, if not danger, to herself; when at length, having satisfied herself on this point, she rose suddenly from her seat, and fixing her ingenuous, yet piercing gaze upon Bill, studied the lineaments of his face for an instant, then said:

"Mr. Rankin, early misfortunes—the entire absence of a parent's love and tenderness—bad associations in your youth—unfortunate circumstances, and perhaps a love of indolence, so naturally the companion of an uninstructed and uncared-for boy, have made you what you are, and what you will continue to be, until, by a life of honest industry and virtuous conduct you retrieve your manhood—an object of suspicion and pity.

"Do not hang down your head, but listen to me, and look at me while you listen. You have this night tendered me a service that no king on earth could bestow. Your motive is concealed in your own heart; if it be a bad one, you are the perfection of dissimulation; if it be an honest one, the Almighty God has given you a generous heart which needs but touching, that its natural pure impulses may flow through the channels of righteousness to a happy end—I believe you, Rankin, and will trust you to the last."

At these last words, Bill—who had been standing awe struck by the manner and language of Lucretia—dropped upon his knees, burying his face in the cushion of a chair, and exclaimed in a voice husky and tremulous with real emotion: "Great God of heaven, I thank you, I thank you," and he wept like a child—this modern gladiator.

Lucretia did not disturb him. She thought, perhaps these were the first pure tears that ever moistened his hard bronzed cheek—that as the rock was now split, the crystal stream would be no longer stranger to his arid life—that his past errors would

be washed out by the soothing influence of those drops of repentance, that enrich the human heart and bring forth flowers where weeds grew rank before.

And yet he wept, while stronger grew the lady's faith in his sincerity. Poor Bill! where was thy recreant father or thy unnatural mother then? Could they have listened to thy sobs or seen thy Herculean frame quivering with that strange, yet exquisite emotion, the damning sin of their desertion of thee in helpless infancy would have filled them with remorse and despair! Weep on, Bill! weep on; for every drop that overleaps the limits of thine eye is winning for thee grace in heaven, and pitying faith in the bosom of the angel who watches o'er thee now.

In a few moments, the violence of Bill's emotions having subsided, Lucretia spoke kindly and bade him be seated, while she should reveal to him a course of action to be pursued for a successful termination of his mission. Obedient as a child, he seated himself, wiped his eyes with a big red and yellow pocket-handkerchief, and with a comical expression, half sheepish and half sorrowful, upon his face, said:

"I hope you won't laugh at me, mam, for bein sitch a babby, but I couldn't help it—I couldn't, no, not if it had a-killed me in the next minnit. You see, mam, I never was nothing worse then a prize-fighter. I never stole nothin in my life, nor did I ever throw off a mill whereby my backers dropped a red cent. But you see, mam, some of the fancy of Park Row made up a mill betwixt me and Tom O'Donnell, without my knowin nothin about it; so I got a little mad about it, and Pete Dobbs said if I didn't like it I might lump it, and so I said I wouldn't fight at all, and they said I wouldn't git nairy nother dollar from them, and I sed I didn't care a cuss. (I beg your pardon," said Bill, rising, and reseating himself.) "So I come out to Orleans to try my luck; and sitch a trial it wos! Why, mam, I hadn't bin in the precious place two days, before every copp I had in the

world, except a few shillings, wos biled out of me. And there I wos, flat broke and nairy friend as I knowed of to lend me a hand. I was mortal low-sperrited at that mishap, and on the next day (I slept on the Levee that night, among some cotton bales), whilst I was watchin some fellers unload a schooner full of West Ingy fruit, who should come up to me but Piddilly, dressed up like one of these deego fruit-sellers. And says he, 'See heer, my man, do you want work?' I jist told him he might bet his life I did; and to shorten the story, mam, me and him made a bargain that I was to row his skifft about the steamboats layin at the Levee, and he wos to sell the fruit. At that time I thought he was an honest man, and as he took me to a decent place to eat and sleep, and adwanced a few dollars to go on, I took him to be a right good-hearted feller, and I would have fought for him till I died. It was not long before he begun to send me out with the skifft by myself to sell, and I soon got to be a better trader than he wos, for some days I sold my whole load. Well, you see, mam, as I never done him out of nairy cent, he had confidence in me, and used to talk to me famileir, and tell me if I minded my eye I would soon have a skifft that I might trade on my own bottom. Now, all this took place in Nowember; and about the middle of December, what dos Drowsy Peter do"——

"Why was Padilla called Drowsy Peter?" said Lucretia.

"Because, mam, all the other deegos said his eyes was three-quarters shet all the time, as if he wos jist goin to sleep. Well, as I sed, what dose he do but say to me one morning: 'Bill, I've sold out the skifft, and I've got something better for you to do.' So he took me to that cussed house (I beg your pardon) on Rampart street, and made me set down in the parlor and wait for the gentleman wot wished to see me.

"Well, there I sot for half an hour, when in walks my gentleman, rigged out like a prince in privit clothes. His eyes was

opened wide enough then, as he stood grinnin at me in the middle of the room.

"Says he, 'Why, Bill, you look *supprized*;' and you'd best believe I was. Well, you see, to shorten the story, mam, he told me he was a Spanish gentleman, in search of a slave girl of his that was passin herself off as white in some rich family in town (Lucretia shuddered), and that he wos also in search of another nigger wench (Lucretia's face turned crimson, but Bill's eyes being fixed on the carpet, he did not see it) who had run away with the proofs of the other one's slavery. Well, I believed every word he sed, and kept watch on different corners where he placed me, to look for a certain person which he described to me."

Here Bill ventured to glance at Lucretia, who this time averted her eyes, and Bill proceeded:

"A few days before Crissmis, he come to me in high glee and the devil's own smile on his face, and sed he had tracked the young fox, and wanted me to take a letter to her. I brought the letter to her house, and the *lady* (Bill laid strong emphasis on the word) came in pusson to answer it on Crissmis Eve. I wos told to be there, as Piddilly said the lady might bring a young man with her who might make a noise, and I wos to stop his mouth.

"The lady come alone. I heard loud talkin upstairs, and as I had begun to suspect that everything wasn't fair and square with Piddilly, I cum up the back steps jist to listen a little. Well, to make a long story short, I heered enough to know Piddilly was a willin, and the *lady*, a mortal injered young woman."

Said Lucretia: "How come Padilla to take you back or rather keep you in his service after the blow you gave him!"

"I'll tell you, mam," said Bill. "You see after the *lady* was brought home, he asked me if I had bin lisnin to his conversa-

tion in that house, and I told him no I hadn't—that I only run up when I heered the lady cry murder. Then says he—'Bill! that lick you give me saved me from doing an act that I might have bin sorry for the rest of my life, and I forgive you for it, and there's my hand.'

"Well, I took his hand and sed it was all right, but I made up my mind I'd quit him. So wen I met him as I told you, with his mug tied up, and he asked me to go to that house with him, a thought struck me that I might heer something more to the pint, for I wasn't sure how the case stood exactly. So I went, and he told me about these babby clothes. Then I knowd he was a liar, because the fust time he told me about the old runaway nigger, he said she had run off with the evidence of the lady's slavery, and instead of that, she run off"——

"With the evidence of my birth and parentage," said Lucretia, as she bounded from her seat and paced the apartment in a moment of irrepressible excitement, while her beautiful face was illumined with an expression of mingling hope, joy and fear.

Bill was enchanted with the success of his story, and while a broad grin invaded his rugged features, he shook his head knowingly and said: "Ah! old Piddilly won't git fur on our leed whilst you've got that blessed head to think with and me to work for you."

"Now then!" said Lucretia, "we must to work at once."

"That's my hand!" said Bill, catching her excitement and jumping from his seat—clapping his hat on his head—and by a motion of his arms stretching out his immense hands from his coat cuffs, "I'll strangle him in two hours from this minnit."

Lucretia could not repress the smile that stole to her lips at the terrible ingenuousness of her new-found champion. Although it might have been better for all the parties concerned and mankind in general to have permitted Mr. Rankin to exercise his calling upon the neck of Pedro Nuñez Padilla, yet it is quite cer-

tain Lucretia had no other designs against the life of that worthy, than such as the law would award in the event of her being able to bring him to justice.

The pistol she herself had aimed at his life, in her hand, was merely a weapon of defence; and on that point she felt she had only done her duty. And a hundred times since that night, she had raised her voice in thanksgiving to the throne of grace that she had been spared the calamity of even Padilla's death. She said:

"No! Mr. Rankin, that's not the work I want you to do." Bill took off his hat and stood like a criminal before her. "Take this money. Go, buy other clothes—change your hat for a fur cap and get a cloak for yourself."

"A cloak, mam?" said Bill "why I should never be able to strike a lick or stop one, with a cloak on. If you please, mam, won't you let me make it an overcoat. But I don't want any money at all; haven't I got all Piddilly's money here?"

"You must not spend one cent of his money, it must be returned to him from Montgomery. I will arrange all that. Do but you follow my instructions—keep a close watch over your tongue and I think we will succeed. Furnish yourself as I have directed—keep concealed, that Padilla may not discover you, and meet Nanny, the same black girl, to-morrow night at 8 o'clock at the garden gate. I will then give you your final instructions. Now, good night, and may Heaven prosper you as you remain faithful to me—good night."

Nanny was called—Bill was conducted safely out of the house undiscovered, and Lucretia retired to her chamber to perfect her undigested plan for the recovery of her valuables and to dream of young Monthemar and love.

CHAPTER V.

VISCOUNT MONTMORENCIE.

The following morning, soon after breakfast, while Lucretia was seated in the library and writing-room debating with herself the best way to inform her ever kind protector of the resolution she had adopted in her own mind, for the recovery of those treasures that were to dispel the mystery of her birth and parentage—restore her to the bosom of her family, and crush the dark and evil spirited man who had over-shadowed her entire existence —Elise entered the room with much more gravity resting on her beautiful face than was usually found there. Without speaking, she seated herself beside Lucretia—taking her hand gently and looking sadly in her face.

"Elise, dear," said Lucretia, "what has stolen the sunshine from you summer face? Tell me, sweetheart, that I may help to bring it back again."

"Oh, Chreechy, I am the unhappy messenger of unpleasant news to us all."

"Bad news," said Lucretia, with a slight start, "Speak! tell me what bad news are you to relate? Is it of sickness or death? It surely cannot be worse than that. But tell me at once. I have grown so nervous lately, that I cannot endure suspense."

Said Elise: "M. Monthemar will sail for France to-morrow. By letters just received, he is informed of the death of his uncle.

But he says he will return in a few months, not having any business that will detain him there beyond two weeks."

Lucretia gazed earnestly but tenderly upon her young companion, and said: "I am grieved that any sorrow should have fallen on M. Monthemar, and am sorry that you should lose such a gallant, gay, and generous companion. I think you said he sails to-morrow; he gives but short notice to M. Belleville and his daughters of his departure."

"Now, Chreechy," said Elise, with much less gravity than she commenced with, "you are (when you please) the most provoking girl in the world. I thought I was bringing bad news to you, and you make fun of me for my pains. Now the old gentleman's death is not unexpected, nor is it a matter to call for much sorrow, since he was almost ninety years of age; but the loss of M. Monthemar, even for so short a time, I thought would be bad news to you. But I'll be revenged on you for your want of confidence in little Elise—you must know, then, my proud mistress, that I am sent to bid you to the drawing-room this instant. You are wanted there—and when you remember how few hours this poor fellow has to compose and deliver his sermon in, it would be cruelty in you to steal any of his time."

Lucretia colored to the temples at this allusion to the probable condition of Monthemar, and before she could reply, Elise continued: "I say, my Cleopatra, that your Anthony is waiting for you in the drawing-room; does your highness heed me?" Lucretia's face became crimson, and her tormentor continued: "Will you have the powder-box, my child? for surely the roses of your cheeks pale the rubies of those saucy lips."

"Elise, my own dear Elise, why do you speak to me thus? In all sincerity, I assure you I have never received from Henry Monthemar a word or even look betokening the slightest shade of preference for the poor orphan and child of mystery; and although I at once acquit you of all desire to even alarm my true

sense of delicacy, believe me, dearest, your levity upon this theme (which is perfectly groundless) inflicts pain upon me. Let me entreat you not to touch the subject before your father or sister. If you must jest upon this ideal attachment of Monthemar's, let me alone be the sharer of your merry pastime."

As Lucretia finished speaking, she rose from her seat and was slowly leaving the room, when Elise—who had not risen—said with mock petulance, "Are you going without me to buckle on his armor?"

"Mischievous girl! you delight in confusing me," said Lucretia, as she hastened from the room, leaving her tormentor reeling with laughter that brought tears into her merry, sparkling, blue eyes.

But we must leave our sweet Elise and follow her grand preceptress to the drawing-room, in which Monthemar was pacing with all the nervousness of a man waiting for a death sentence.

Now when Lucretia left the library she was fully convinced that Monthemar had determined to make a declaration of his passion for her; although she had firmly resolved not to permit him to extract any confession of love from her until the mystery of her birth and parentage was entirely removed, her heart throbbed and fluttered with a thousand ecstasies of delight. Noble Lucretia, what would she not have given to be able to meet him with rapture for rapture—to breathe into his soul the story of her love—a love which, springing from admiration and esteem, had grown into perfection ere its presence was noted in her heart.

This could not be. Fate had decreed their separation, and she even rejoiced at his sudden departure, for his absence would leave her free to prosecute her plans for the recovery of her treasures. She knew enough of Monthemar's character to be certain of his speedy return to the United States, should she give him the slightest encouragement, and she knew the state of her own feel-

ings too well, to believe it possible that she should permit the young patrician to depart without strewing his pathway with the brightest flowers of hope, of confidence and love.

This was not coquetry—she had no intention of trifling with his feelings by holding out false signals; she only wished to prevent an engagement, and thereby restrain the enthusiasm which, she well knew belonged to the nature of Monthemar, and which, upon any confession of love on her part, would be very likely to break out in all the wild rapture a pure heart feels on finding its love returned. Being so resolved, and having recovered all her self-possession, she entered the drawing-room and encountered Monthemar in his impatient walk. At the moment, there was a heavy frown on his brow, and the beautiful curves of his mouth were lost in the settled determination then resting there; but in an instant the clouds passed away, and the quiet, calm smile once more illuminated his manly, handsome face. Stepping forward, he took the extended hand of Lucretia, then seated himself on a chair before her without speaking a word; but the quiet smile still lingered on his lips and in his eyes, which shone with so much brilliancy and deferential ardor, that—although he had chosen a position that would seem to prevent the escape of Lucretia—she was not in the slightest degree embarrassed, and Monthemar said:

"If I call you Lucretia for the first time, do not condemn me for a want of respect or for any undue familiarity; for since the moment we first met, I trust you will acquit me of ever having shown you the slightest discourtesy."

Here he slightly bowed to our heroine, while that quiet smile crept on every feature of his face, and lit it up with a glorious expression of sublime sincerity and truth.

"I am to sail hence in a few hours, and consequently it is possible we may never converse again. The parting from those with whom the happiest hours of life have been shared is, and should

ever be, a signal for a frank interchange of sentiments; that in the great void created by the absence of those we love, the sweet remembrance of our parting hour may light us to a future of happiness and joy. Now, I could well have deferred *our* parting for many reasons; first, because the charm of your society has made me an idle spenthrift of all time wasted from your presence; and secondly, because I have hoped for more time within the radius of your brilliant yet ingenuous nature, the better to perfect me in your confidence and esteem. I would have waited cheerfully for months yet to come, ere I had ventured to unmask my heart to you, Lucretia, had not this necessity arisen to force me onward to a full knowledge of all that I so ardently desire to know. I love you, Lucretia; and that love is not the rapid offspring of a fancy dazzled by the comeliness of your person or the brilliancy of your mind, but an enduring flower parented by sterling worth and pure excellence—a flower that will stand unbended through every storm of life—that to the dawning of eternity will drop its sweetest exhalations upon the shrine of its devotions. Oh lady! deem me not bold in my declarations—I were a much bolder man to have gone hence with my secret in my heart. Love comes not of our own volition; it is a subtle yet a sweet poison that genders in the heart, stealing drop by drop its honest independence until that heart becomes its abject slave."

Lucretia raised her eyes to his animated face, and smiling, said:

"Is there no antidote for this subtle, sweet poison that you so eloquently speak of? must the sufferer die?"

"One antidote only, lady; without which, the sufferer dies a thousand times each passing hour, yet lives and lingers on to die and die again."

"But why lingers the sufferer, knowing the antidote?" said Lucretia.

"Why do we dwell upon the fairy tracery of a golden dream? why watch the stars with eager longing to possess full

knowledge of their extent and lustre—why kiss the new-born zephyr from the lips of spring as if to catch upon its noiseless wing another kiss sent by some kindred heart, and then sink into despondency and sigh, that all we dream of, hope for, and struggle to possess, is far beyond our reach?"

"If all you dream of, hope for, and struggle to possses, be really beyond reach—as your figure teaches—why should not the sufferer despair at once and die, not having what is wanting to unenslave his heart?"

"He cannot, lady, he cannot. The light of Hope steals in upon the darkness of despair and drives her from his soul, which, being lit again with pure celestial fire, glows more intensely for its distant idol. To resume the story of my love—I early knew your heart was virgin to its first affection; for when our thoughts have met in passing from our eyes, I have seen the rich carnation gather upon your cheek disdaining every effort of the heart to call it back again," (the carnation commenced to gather all over her face); "and although I was not vain enough to claim those blushes as harbingers of my fixed happiness, they whispered to my heart that I at least might hope. I did hope, and will do so, till from your lips the words of fate shall fall to rouse me from my dream to a life—an eternity of bliss or sorrow."

Said Lucretia with gentle dignity: "I were unworthy of the honor you have done me, were I less candid than M. Monthemar; nor can my sacred regard for true maiden modesty take an alarm at this *first* offer of a tribute to my poor worth and merit. "I own that I have watched you growing to this condition—that I have studied even the changing of your voice when of late you have spoken to me, that I have detected a tremor in your hand when you have said good-night; yet, while this study filled my heart with visionary happiness, I fervently prayed that I might learn no more."

"And wherefore have you prayed that you might learn no more?"

"Because there exists at present a fatal barrier between me and the happiness a woman would win, in winning you. But don't urge me, Monthemar, to be more explicit. There is a dreadful mystery overshadowing my existence—it must be dispelled ere love can woo me to partner my fate with any man. I could not bear to see the hot blood rushing to the brow or receding from the lips of him I love, and all for loving me—me, an outcast, a stranger in the world—of parentage unknown—perhaps the child of degradation, and shame, but certainly of care and sorrow. No! Monthemar, I will never graft upon a noble heart the blight that withers mine."

As she ceased speaking her face seemed animated with supernal light and beauty. Her eyes were turned full upon the face of Monthemar, and beamed with love; but the expressive mouth denoted her resolution was not to be shaken. Her lover looked and wondered, yet he spoke no word. Her brief sentences had lighted two fires in his bosom, and each was raging fiercely to win the empire there. First, love, then admiration, and then love again came tumultuously to his lips, but neither could escape, so fiercely did the struggle rage within. After a moment's pause, Monthemar regained his powers of speech, and being determined not to lose the advantage he imagined he had gained, as well as anxious to restrain Lucretia from any further explanations of a painful character, exclaimed impetuously:

"Lucretia! my own noble Lucretia! I know *all* the past, and yet I love as man ne'er loved before."

She turned deathly pale—her features became rigid, and her eyes glared upon him with unnatural light. At length her lips moved, but no sound came from them. Monthemar became alarmed, and reaching forward, took her hand; it was listless and cold as marble. He spoke to her tenderly, she heeded him not.

ceased entirely—her color became more ashy—
be turning into stone. He let go her hand, it
to her side. He seized it again, and pressed the
to his burning lips ; still she heeded not. Believ-
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om for aid, when he was arrested by one short,
Then followed a slight quivering of the eyelids
ge to the inner line of her lips—a spasmodic
fingers ; then the fountain of sorrow was disen-
pure, soothing waters came rushing to her eyes,
on the couch, overwhelmed with tears. Oh, what
for that poor girl to weep. Never before had
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and a moment's reflection would have displayed

this truth. But the unhappy girl had endured so many trials and alarms since Christmas Eve, it is not surprising that she should have lost her balance on this occasion.

Lucretia was not one of those to leave an error unrepaired; and as calmness was rapidly returning to her fluttering heart, she prepared to satisfy her lover as to the cause of her sudden and remarkable indisposition, even at the cost of some little innocent dissimulation. She would not tell him a falsehood, she only would not tell quite all the truth. We must forgive her for this. She loved Monthemar—was by Monthemar beloved; and yet she had nobly determined not to taste the happiness these loves promised, by giving her sanction to a closer union of their hearts until every vestige of doubt as to her birth and parentage should be removed forever.

Monthemar, too, was not a little embarrassed. He felt he had done or said something calculated to powerfully affect Lucretia's feelings, yet he knew not exactly what it was. "*All the past*," said he to himself, "were the words last spoken by me. Can there be a rougher past in the brief existence of this heavenly being, than that which I already know; it is impossible! Stolen from her parents while an infant—reared by the ruffian who committed the villainy—bearing that ruffian's name as an eternal remembrance of the deep wrong she has sustained—left in profound ignorance of her birth and station; yet, with all these bars and chances against her, to achieve this day's perfection in all that is divine and beautiful, is wonderful. What care I if she be orphan or foundling; no base blood courses from her heart, while her peerless head would add lustre to the brightest coronet. The man who loves wisely becomes the happiest of men when successful in his love. Real love is wisdom; so is it wise to love. We repose all confidence in one we love, who in return takes half the care and sorrow from our hearts for being loved. Being loved, and loving, the world becomes

wholesome to the mind; for all that is sacred, pure, and lovely in the world, is sedulously cultivated to make love more acceptable to its object. Now, I certainly love Lucretia—I am sure of it. Mine is no shallow feeling, and I prove it thus: There's a being entirely sundered from every tie of relationship, nameless (Padilla is not her name), and absolutely without the power of naming the land of her birth. While here is another being (that's me) certainly known in this country as Henry Monthemar, and in *la belle France* as Viscount Henry de Montmorencie, of princely fortune, patrician blood, proud relations (a very common fact), fine principles (my best feather), and of tolerable good sense. I discover in the much abused lady every charm and grace that God and education can bestow. Having studied this handiwork of nature with the care and skill of an artist, I find the subject unexceptionable in every light and shade. Then what can be more natural than that I should covet this beautiful creation to adorn my home with, to give it an air of paradise, to wean me from senseless pleasure (a great misnomer), to soften the asperity of my nature, to teach me the value of pure companionship, and in short, to make me a better man? I answer, nothing! Then, I must have her. What is it to me that the remorseless waves of fate have thrown her in my arms? It is the jewel I prize, not the gilded and bedizened casket, 'lineage and fortune.' The name of Monthemar will lend her no honor that she will not nobly repay. I am not a vain man, but, after all that has been thus far spoken to-day, I think I could safely swear she will never discard me for another, if I am careful not to deserve it. However, I must settle all doubts before this interview terminates."

Having finished his confidential conversation with himself, he spoke to Lucretia—who was evidently waiting for him to begin again—thus:

"Lucretia, I have been the cause of great suffering to you this

morning, and although I am entirely unconscious as to which word or sentence my misfortune is attributable, believe me, I would have rather died than to have been the cause of those bitter tears."

"Oh, Monthemar! the tears were not bitter; but the momentary anguish they swept away was bitter indeed. You see how weak I am. A mere thought—a fancy! that died the instant after birth, could stop the channels of the heart and set volition at defiance. 'Tis I who should ask forgiveness for showing so little command of feeling when so much was required. But let us avoid the subject, and speak of your voyage."

"You smile, Lucretia; and though that smile falls like a ray of sunshine on my heart, it whispers an intent to baffle my present purpose."

A slight blush rose to the cheeks of Lucretia, and he continued:

"What other time is left me to learn what I would know?"

"What more would you know, Monthemar? Did I not speak plainly and calmly? My resolution is fixed. Parentless—without a name—without a country or even a home, save that which the generous stranger has given to me, it were unbecoming the respect I owe myself, and the sacred duty I owe my mother, to become love consort in this life, before her memory and my identity be rescued from the mysterious veil that keeps them from the light."

As she ceased speaking, Monthemar seized her hand and dropped upon his knees before her, and said:

"Lucretia! dear Lucretia, call back that resolution, or you drive me to distraction."

"Monthemar, I will not chide you for this weakness, for you have ever been gentle and considerate with me; but I entreat you to resume your seat. What if some one should enter the room?"

"Why, let them," cried the enthusiastic Monthemar. "They would not be surprised."

"Not surprised! You rave, Monthemar."

"No, by every saint, I do not rave. Lucretia, do you believe me a thief—one who would enter the house of a friend, and try to steal such a treasure as you? You should have known me better. M. Belleville, his daughters, and even black Nanny, all know and approve my declarations to you." (Chreechy turned scarlet.) "You see I am not armed with my own poor eloquence only; your best-approved good friends sustain my cause, against which no substantial opposition can be brought by you. You do not love another; you admit I am not an object of total indifference to you; and I only ask permission to love and to hope. The Bellevilles extorted many promises from me before they gave their consent. Oh, be sure they love you much—very much, but not half so much as I do, Lucretia."

And the scamp looked up into her eyes with so much genuine tenderness and truth, that he extracted from her soul such an intense expression of love, that, could it have found utterance, he must have been forever satisfied; but it died upon her lips, and lay floating in her eyes, which were fixed upon his own. She had unconsciously thrown her head forward, so that her brow nearly touched the upturned, eloquent face of Monthemar. He still held her right hand. She placed her left on his brow, gently throwing aside his curly hair, and said, in the softest tones of her voice, without a tremor, but with that world of love beaming from her eyes:

"Monthemar, we have no more strength than children. You must be contented; I have told you all—indeed I have. Now, will you not release me, Monthemar?" And yet her fingers lingered in his hair and upon his brow.

"Dearest Lucretia, if your eyes had audible language, I were contented now. They speak transports to my heart, while your cruel lips deny *me one single word*—Hope!"

"Do not call me cruel. Hope, Monthemar—Lucretia bids you hope."

A cry of joy burst from his lips, as he devoured her hand with kisses. Just at that instant, Elise came bounding into the room, and nearly overturned Monthemar before she saw how matters stood. Said Elise:

"Oh, beg pardon. Picking up pins and needles, I suppose." Then, wheeling round, seizing the front of her dress, and arching her neck forward, like a bird about to mount the air, she flew from the room, making the house ring with the echo of her laughter.

So completely surprised were Lucretia and Monthemar by this sunny apparition, that he remained kneeling until the phantom had disappeared; then, rising, their eyes met—they could not repress their mirth. At the very moment their hearts had reached the culminating point of heavenly bliss, that sunbeam had entered to light them back to earth.

Monthemar was the first to speak, and very naturally, too; for the poor fellow was so elated with the success of his siege to the heart of Lucretia, that he was disposed to love Elise next best in the world for being the first witness of his consummated happiness. The farcical termination of his ecstasies by the sudden advent of the blond beauty was entirely forgotten, while her exclamation—"I beg pardon. Picking up pins and needles, I suppose"—and her exit, which was no less rapid than her entrance had been unexpected, were the most excellent food for laughter, and he enjoyed it even at the risk of being rebuked by his more grave, yet smiling, blushing companion.

There she sat, glancing at the spot his knee had occupied, then at the door through which the "little mischief" had flown in and out, then half reproachfully at the face of Monthemar, which beamed with delight as if in very triumph over her confusion at the discovery.

"*Tell me, my own* Lucretia, by what magic do you control

that little fairy—what art do you employ to subdue her Ariel spirit long enough to impart one serious reflection to her mind? To me, she seems the incarnation of joy. Her very eyes laugh at you ere mirth takes character upon her lips, which, mischievously curved with mock gravity, defy all humor to resist *their* charm. Love her, Lucretia, for she has no heart for any, save her father, sister and you. Love her for my sake, for she was the earnest monitor who gave me courage when my heart failed—who urged me to peril all my heart at once ere I knew the condition of your own: She is indeed an angel!"

"I do love her, Monthemar, with all the affection of a fond sister. To me, in my moments of despondency, she has ever been the bright harbinger of coming happiness. The dread of dying the unknown being that I am, has often fled before her words of hope; and when she has found me with o'erflowing eyes—for I have shed many tears while thinking of the past—her touching grief for my unhapiness would sooner call me back to calmness than even her sunny mirth. But tell me now of your voyage."

"True, I had almost forgotten we are to part so soon. 'Tis ever thus. When bliss like mine invades the heart, all else is soon forgotten."

"I thought, Monthemar, we were to speak of your return to Europe; but you, upon the wings of hope"—— He interrupted her and said:

"Upon the wings of love! Lucretia. Hope's anchor moors me, where the wings of love have borne me."

"A truce to this lightness, Monthemar, and come to such sober entertainment as friends in their last adieus should indulge in. We are on the eve of parting, and it may be forever. Oh, Monthemar, frowns or sighs cannot alter the truth that I have spoken; we may never meet again; and should it be so decreed by Providence"——

"I will not hear you *speak thus*, Lucretia; my blood becomes

cold when I think it possible we may meet no more. Do not, I entreat you, speak to me in that strain, else will I forego the performance of a duty and remain forever by your side."

He took her hand and respectfully kissed it.

She did not withdraw it, but gazed earnestly in his face, while a smile of sweet sadness stole upon her classic features—rendering them more exquisitely beautiful. He returned her gaze, but with so much genuine, abiding love, that all her resolutions of the previous evening were nearly dissolved in her present ecstasy. She was most pained by their coming separation, for in her mind the chances were double what they were in the mind of her lover, that they might never meet again. Her intended journey to New York, and the character of the mission resolved on, presented to her clear understanding many difficulties and dangers to overcome ere she could hope for success.

She knew Padilla to be a thoroughly depraved man, whose qualities of hatred and revenge were only equalled by his subtle wit and the quickness of his apprehension; and should he discover Rankin's real character and her sudden disappearance she doubted not that he would fly to the Empire City to frustrate her plans; and should they encounter on the same pursuit, she felt the struggle would be a mortal one: *she* was resolved to triumph or die. These reflections passing with the speed of thought through her mind, produced the silent, eloquent look of rapture that reached into each other's soul. In his, she saw only love, hope and happiness. In hers, he saw not those thoughts, which, like dark ministers of evil, stole in upon its sunshine to darken the hour of parting.

Poor Lucretia, she endured her sufferings with all the heroism of her ancient ancestry. The longer she gazed, the more deeply she loved, and more fixed grew her resolution to win for her lover a name for the object of his love. The last words spoken by Monthemar, told her too plainly that the slightest indiscretion

on her part would so effectually alarm him, that he would abandon his intended voyage to France, or press her to consummate his happiness by a speedy marriage; and being now fully upon her guard, she proceeded with more caution, saying:

"Monthemar, if I spoke too seriously to you, I regret it. I desired only to remind you that death will sometimes pass by the aged to embrace the young. There is no peril in your voyage to alarm me, nor is there any in mine that should cause you uneasiness; yet"——

"Your voyage, Lucretia? What voyage?" said he.

Here was another error she had committed, but not of so grave a character as to defy repair. She answered:

"Is not life a voyage on which we are embarked to the fulfillment of our destiny? Is danger, only the companion of him who journeys by sea? Has death no shaft but for the wanderer on the ocean's trackless desert? Ah, Monthemar! however far apart our duty may command us, the same sun will cheer us, the same hope animate us and the same destroying minister will hang upon our footsteps. But come! let us be gay, and join the family, for much do I suspect I'll learn no more of your preparations for departure, the term of your absence and the material causes that take you hence, until M. Belleville, Margaret, or Elise, with their superior tact, compel you to be more explicit than you have been to me."

"The family are saving us some trouble. See, M. Belleville and the ladies are here."

As Monthemar was speaking, they entered the drawing-room. M. Belleville and Margaret came frankly forward and took Monthemar's extended hands, and from the conversation that immediately ensued, Lucretia was for the first time instructed that the presence of Monthemar was entirely unknown to them, until a few moments of their entrance. Although Elise entered the room with her father and sister, she had not come forward to

greet Monthemar, but loitered behind, finding, for the first time, something very attractive in a few pastoral paintings of the Flemish school, that adorned the walls.

"My dear Monthemar," said Belleville; "pardon me for my apparent indifference, 'tis but a moment since I was informed of your early visit. Elise came to the study where Margaret and myself were engaged, and commenced drawing pictures of windmills with her crayons, and portraits and characters with her tongue, with so much truthful coloring, that she completely engrossed our attention for an hour, when finding it impossible to pursue any art or science while her humor lasted, I told her so; my lady began to pout, and said I and Meg no longer wished to see her laugh. She put up her pencils and was preparing to leave the room, when she suddenly remembered that her visit to the study was not for the purpose of drawing or painting, but only to inform Margaret and myself that you had done us the honor of an early visit. But I am pleased to know that you have not been entirely alone."

As he finished his last sentence, he looked kindly at Lucretia, whose blushing cheeks and averted eye assured him at once that Elise had been playing a part to enable Monthemar to declare himself. He knew of Monthemar's intentions, and had readily encouraged him to prosecute his suit; and he was highly gratified in discovering that both his daughters were wedded to the cause of Lucretia and her (as they thought) speedily approaching union with their noble guest. The Bellevilles were strangers to envy and dissimulation. They loved Lucretia, and her good fortune in winning the affections of Monthemar awakened the liveliest emotions of happiness in their hearts. At that moment they little thought how soon they were to lose their favorite, or what suffering was yet in store for her.

Now, Elise not joining the group, had upon Monthemar and Lucretia the most contrary effect. It made Lucretia nervous;

and she sat in terror lest the little sprite should suddenly make some allusion to the position of affairs at the moment she burst in upon the kneeling Monthemar. Simply loving him had never created any uneasiness in her bosom; but now that everything was known—that she was fairly betrayed almost into the position of an affianced, her calmness seemed to have left her and she fluttered, trembled and blushed as the exquisite truth nestled still closer in her heart. Poor girl! To that hour, stern sad thoughts had been the companions of her solitude; but now all the intense love in her ardent nature had found an outlet, and it flowed tumultuously upon the shrine of the magician whose art had given action to the flood.

Monthemar, on the contrary, was delighted with the serio-comic importance Elise assumed upon the strength of the discovery she had made. He plainly saw a laughing devil in her eye, although the demure expression of her rosy mouth would have shamed a Quakeress at her first public meeting; and while he maintained a lively conversation with M. Belleville, Margaret and Lucretia—whose uneasiness he had not failed to notice—the gravity of his muscles was rapidly giving way before the rising storm of mirth provoked by the artful artlessness of Elise, who seemed determined not to be one of the party until her assumed contemplative mood should be noticed and herself called to order. This soon occurred.

"What have I done to Miss Elise that she withholds the radiance of her smile and the music of her voice from me this morning?" said Monthemar. "I do well remember a certain hour—a most happy hour to me—when Queen Fair Star called me Harry Monthemar, and frankly placed her hand in mine; in what have I been so unfortunate as to forfeit her '*then*' confidence and esteem."

Elise had gained her point. She was no longer permitted to wander about the room and gaze at the pictures. No! She was

forced into the circle; and if in conversation she should happen to say anything that would bring the roses to Lucretia's cheek, or a gallant defence of his conduct from the lips of Monthemar, it would not be her fault—they would not let her rest by herself. She answered, with the most provoking, offended dignity, thus:

"I have found out your real character, sir, and I think, after all that has occurred to-day, your heart—if you have such a thing—will not reproach me for my coolness."

Margaret and her father were all amazement at this speech. Monthemar tried to be confused, while poor Chreechy became intent upon the embroidery of the window curtains. Elise continued:

"If I do not speak more plainly, sir, it is not for any consideration I entertain for your feelings."

Monthemar could resist no longer. Every particle of his gravity was driven away, and he fairly shook with laughter, which, by the by, although very annoying to Lucretia—who heard if she did not see—greatly relieved Belleville and Margaret, who at once saw that Elise was determined on mischief; but they thought Monthemar was to be her victim this time, for the confusion of Lucretia had escaped their notice. From the manner of Monthemar, Belleville concluded he was ready for the encounter, and being proud of his daughter's wit and humor, he determined to bring matters to a climax, saying:

"Elise, what is this great discovery in the character of M. Monthemar that seems to have baffled your penetration until the eve of his departure for Europe? What is it, my daughter?"

"Why, thus it is, my honored father. For the last month that gentleman has been most profuse to me with honeyed words, set phrases, gentle pressures of the hand, and smiles, and sighs, and lover's oaths, until I thought he was dying with love; when, this very day, regardless of my woman's feelings (Monthemar

laughed until the tears streamed down his cheeks), I accidentally (she glanced archly at Lucretia) detected him on his knees to—to—another lady."

Margaret flew to the window and embraced Lucretia. Belleville lost all control over his usual calmness, and laughed as boisterously as Monthemar; while Elise, with the most imperturbable gravity, continued thus:

"Is all this nothing? Are the feelings and self-love of a gentlewoman of my position to be made the sport of any modern Paris who may choose to storm my heart for pastime? And do you dare to double the injury by thus laughing in the face of the wreck you have made? Look at me, sir," and she put on the most piteous expression. "Cannot a breaking heart move you to a confession? Oh, cruel! cruel Monthemar!"

And she put her embroidered hankerchief to her face, covering it all except half an eye, through which she peered at Lucretia, whose face was half hidden upon the bosom of Margaret. M. Belleville and Monthemar found it impossible to restrain their laughter, while Margaret was whispering to Lucretia the sweetest encouragement to withstand the mischievous sallies of Elise, who, being not yet contented with her own performance, said, crossing to where Lucretia was folded in the arms of Margaret:

"Chreechy, dear, your poor little Elise turns to you for the sympathy these gentlemen deny her. Have you no comfort for me, sweetheart?"

And as she spoke she gently unfolded the arm of Lucretia from the neck of Margaret, and pressed the quiescent hand within her own, looking up in our heroine's face with such an expression of concentrated love, mirth and mischief, that Lucretia was perfectly subdued. She had no words for expression, but clasping Elise to her bosom, murmured, "My angel sister!"

The tableau was certainly very beautiful. M. Belleville and Monthemar having recovered some of their calmness, stood with

clasped hands and joyous faces, watching the union of those two bosoms that heaved in perfect union, while the mingling of the jet and amber tresses of the twain partially concealed the deep carnation that suffused the face and neck of these children of nature, and by their trembling shadows lent a richer hue to the tell-tale flower of love. And Margaret, whose nature was as gentle as the summer's wind, inclining forward, both hands crossed upon her throbbing bosom, her beautiful head slightly arched to one side, spoke not, but there was a tremulous drop—a liquid diamond—floating on the verge of either deep blue orb, that spoke more eloquently than words the fullness of her joy. And so ended all the stern resolution of Lucretia not to promise anything to Monthemar, much less to part from him an affianced bride.

But so ardent was his love, and so manly his declarations, that, seconded as they were by her own ingenuous heart and the untiring zeal of Elise, who, as she had told Monthemar, was determined to have him for a brother, she was reduced to perfect submission in a few hours, as we have seen. Monthemar was invited to stay for dinner, and he accepted without pressing; then the happy party adjourned to the reception parlor, where the harp and piano were called on to complete the harmony of those five kindred souls.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT.

The evening had closed in gloomily, the wind howled in fitful blasts, hurling the rain against the closed blinds of the mansion with all the violence and rattling of hail at intervals, while each momentary lull brought to the ear the dull moaning of the tempest without, or the sharp clang of some neighboring shutter, torn from its fastenings, dashing against the wall. The clock on the mantel struck seven, and yet M. Monthemar made no movement to depart, although he had confessed his trunks were yet unpacked.

The gaiety of the party, except Lucretia, had not been disturbed by the storm, but she, poor girl, was thinking of her appointment with her first lieutenant, William Rankin, Esq., who was to be at the garden gate by eight o'clock precisely, to receive his final instructions previous to his departure a second time to Montgomery. At half-past seven her nervousness became apparent to the quick eye of her lover, who rose suddenly but cheerfully, declaring his happiness to be so perfect he had quite forgotten the sum of labor yet to be performed by him ere midnight.

The coach was ordered to the door, the noble Frenchman made his adieus with all the confidence and vivacity of his nature, promised to call very early for his final leave-taking, and the next moment the coach was flying to his hotel.

Feeling that Lucretia needed repose (they little knew her), the

Bellevilles retired, and urged her to do the same. In a few moments the lower part of the house was closed for the night, the storm being too violent to admit the possibility of a visit. M. Belleville was seated in the library engaged with his books, and Margaret had gone with Elise in her chamber to talk over the grand fête that would follow the union of their dearly beloved monitress and sister (for so they regarded her) with the Viscount Henry de Montmorencie, on his return from France.

Lucretia hastened to her room and summoned Nanny, who was a full confederate of Lucretia's, so far as providing for her interviews with Rankin.

It is proper at this point to tell the reader that Nanny and her mother had been purchased by M. Belleville about the time our heroine had entered his family. The mother died shortly after, and Nanny, who had been deeply affected by her mother's death, had found great relief in the consoling kindness of Lucretia; and being of an ingenuous and affectionate nature, she had clung more closely to the young governess than to any one else, which fact being observed by the kind-hearted Belleville, he had given Nanny to Lucretia to be her exclusive attendant.

This brought the intelligent negress in closer intimacy with her darling Miss Chreechy, and it was not long before she became a most expert hair-dresser and lady's maid generally. As we have said, Nanny was of the pure African blood. Her face was regularly featured, and wore a very intelligent expression. Her invariable good humor, her tidiness, and unobtrusive, deferential manners, rendered her a great favorite in the family. At the time our story begins, Nanny was a fully matured woman, and barring her ludicrous mutilation of the English language, she was as fine a *femme de chambre* as the most fastidious lady could require.

"Nanny," said Lucretia, as the servant entered the room with noiseless step, and a look of grave importance upon her face,

"have you prepared the little room for the reception of *the* man ?"

"Yes, Miss Chreechy, and a big fire blazin in de grate to dry him by, for I'm sure he's monsus wet."

"Is he at the gate already ?"

"Goodness me ! he's bin dare ever since jist afore dark. He said he feared he come too late, so he come a leetle too soon."

"You have seen and spoken to him, Nanny ?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And what more did he say ?"

"He say 'Good evenen, Miss Ebony Mug, is your mistress on de lark?' and I say, no, my mistress was in de parlor waiten for de company to go; and he says, 'All right, my Jap-pan rose; jist tell her dis rain aint nothin—I'd stand it a whole month to look in her face a minnit.'"

"Let us not keep him in the storm any longer. Bring him into the room; but be careful, Nanny, that no one discovers you. Be smart and watchful, that's a good girl."

"Yes, yes; Nanny's all eyes and ears when she waits on her dear young missus. Nanny won't be cotched—no, indeed. Thar isn't no niggers in dis house smart enuff for Nanny—yes, me."

And with these words she left the room as noiselessly as she had entered. Lucretia threw off the dress and ornaments she had worn at dinner and the early part of the evening, and robing herself in a heavy cashmere wrapper, to exclude the cold while passing from her chamber down to the room in which the second interview with Rankin was to take place, waited calmly for Nanny's return.

Since the moment Lucretia had betrayed her heart to Monthemar, and tacitly received his pledge of love, she had been inspired with confidence in the success of her intended journey. Now, more than ever. was she determined to win her identity at

least, that her generous lover might not receive to his bosom a nameless as well as dowerless bride.

She grew impatient for the dawn of that day which was to bear away her lover, and leave her free to plunge into the dangerous labor she had resolutely undertaken to perform successfully or perish in the attempt. In a few moments Nanny returned, and, without speaking, motioned her mistress that Rankin was safely housed. Lucretia as silently left her chamber, and once more entered into the presence of her herculean champion and soon to be travelling companion.

Bill, on entering the house, had taken off his India-rubber cap and overcoat, and hung them in the passage, but he had persisted in keeping on his huge old-fashioned rubber overshoes, notwithstanding Nanny had expostulated against the propriety of entering her lady's presence with such looking feet; but on his side, Bill had argued that as this was a kind of secret service he was engaged in, it was far better not to alarm the house by his heavy tread, which must have been the case if he had taken off his rubbers, for he said he had on new boots with high heels and iron rims.

And there he stood, in the same little room, near the fire, waiting patiently for his newly-enlisted mistress. But mark the alteration in his appearance. His hair, which had been neatly cut, was well oiled and perfumed, and parted smoothly over his right eye. He wore a very dark grey frock coat and pantaloons, a black cloth double-breasted vest, a plain black silk cravat, tied in a simple square knot, a plain white shirt, the collar of which ascended nearly to his ears; his hands, which had been incased in dark buckskin gloves, were now perfectly clean, the *soil* having been harrowed from his finger nails perhaps for the first time since the hour of his birth.

There he stood, this child of chance, perhaps shame, but certainly of most unnatural and base desertion, with his stout,

honest heart thumping against his ribs with such a confusion of emotions that he fairly trembled with an excitement which he could not possibly account for. First, he thought perhaps Lucretia had changed her mind, and would abandon the undertaking as being too perilous; then he thought she might have, upon reflection, concluded that *he* was as big a villain as Padilla; and *that* thought brought the blood to his severe but not vulgar face, until it became crimson, and burnt him as it had never burnt before. And then he chanced to look in the large French mirror set in the opposite wall, and saw himself full length, with his new clothes on, for the first time. This apparition revived him a little. He had never seen himself in full before, and his appearance was anything but displeasing to him.

He actually smiled as he noticed the great change a little trimming had wrought upon him. Then he drew his coat in smartly at the waist, and took a side view of himself. Then he closed his left fist, and drew it slowly up to his shoulder, as if in the act of launching that weapon of self-defence at the nasal organ of some imaginary antagonist. Then he let it fall slowly to his side, showed all his large white teeth—for they, too, had been scrubbed, so that no vestige of tobacco remained—shook his head knowingly, then Lucretia quietly entered the room at the moment he had reached this highest point of self-admiration. A blast from the charmed horn of Oberon could not have had a more stunning effect upon him than did the entrance of Lucretia. His head sunk upon his breast, and nothing about him gave any sign of life except his blood, and that seemed to be struggling to desert all its natural channels and locate itself in his face. He stood like a criminal before Lucretia, who could not help smiling at his confusion. In an instant her quick eye discerned the change in his appearance, and from this first step toward improvement she drew the most favorable conclusions.

"I hope I have not annoyed you by not coming sooner. The

night is so dreadful without, I thought it probable you would not come."

Now this salutation came so gently to his ear at the moment he expected to be rated for his impudence in daring to look at himself in the mirror, that he immediately revived, and said, still not daring to look full in Lucretia's face:

"If you please, mam, I hope I aint been doing nothin out of the way; but if you'll believe me, I never looked in sitch a big lookin-glass in my life nairy time before. And then it wos all accident, for I jist happened to cut me eye acrost the room, and I seen a feller all dressed up in black-lookin clothes, and I never knowed it wos me till I went up and looked at him right sharp, and jist at that minnit you come in, mam, and that's the whole truth, mam, as sure as I aint the same Bill Rankin I used to be."

Lucretia smiled good naturedly at his earnestness, though she sighed for his grammar, telling him she was pleased with his improved appearance, and requested him to be seated and listen well to the instructions she was about to give him. Bill obeyed like a child, but nevertheless managed to place himself with his back to the lights, for he could not yet endure the glare of the lamps and the flashing of her eyes at the same moment.

"Now, Mr. Rankin, I consider you fairly enlisted in my service for this intended expedition, and as I am confident I have nothing to fear in you except perhaps too much—or rather let me say, a too unguarded zeal, it is necessary to the success of my mission that you should yield the most implicit obedience to my directions. Do you understand me?"

"I do, mam," said Bill; "and I'll die before I'll turn aside from your orders."

"This is my plan," said Lucretia. "You will start for Montgomery by the morning boat for Mobile, and conceal yourself, *not* in such a manner as to excite suspicion of the people in Mont-

ut merely to avoid being recognized by any of your old
ices, should any of them pass that way. You will
ur name to that of William Jones, and so have your
stered on the books of the hotel. If you are questioned
uisitive people"——
Bill interrupted her and said: "Why, I'll just put
ese (shaking his awful fist) on his mug by way of a

!" said Lucretia, "do you not see how imprudent you
you were to strike any one, you would make more
r me."
ver shet my fist agin without you tell me to, mam; for
aven knows I would die to serve you."
to go on from the point when you interrupted me,
u be questioned, say boldly that you are in my service
ervice of *Madame Vale*, under which name I shall travel
in New York, to prevent Padilla, as much as possible,
ting my movements, which he will attempt the moment
ers my absence from this city. Should I be detained
two longer than I now anticipate, be you not uneasy,
n quietly at your hotel. As matters now stand, I
leave on the day after to-morrow. Now take this
e; it contains fifty dollars in gold. Judging from
tly improved appearance, your first supply of money
almost expended. Remember, the money you obtained
dilla must be returned; but on reflection, it were
to mail any letter to him until we arrive in New York,
n the hope of concealing my departure until we arrive
ative city. The full plan of operations I will develop
we journey from Montgomery. You had better sleep
ake to-night to avoid the possibility of discovery.
at letter of introduction to the New York police, for
rove serviceable. And now, good night! Be faith

ful, William Jones (she smiled as she spoke), and if we succeed, I can safely promise you such a reward as will make you comfortable and happy all the balance of your days. Good night! Do not promise me anything to-night, and above all things, do not forget your new name or mine. But to make this sure, I will write them on two different cards that you may make no mistake."

"Do, if you please," said Bill, "and write my name on a big one, and yours on a little one, for you know, mam, I cannot read, and if I should forget the name, why it will be an easy matter to git some little boy to read them for me. I hardly think I could forget *Wale*, its sitch an uncommon name; but Jones is so common that you had better give it to me in writing."

This was accordingly done, and William Jones was conducted safely out into the storm, that still raged with unabated violence, by the faithful Jap-pan rose, whose confidence in her mistress was such that her curiosity was not at all excited by the strange visits of the gladiator.

Left once more alone, she determined to banish all further thought of her expedition from her mind, that a full night's repose might strengthen her for the task of revealing her intentions to the Bellevilles, the moment after her lover should have entered upon his voyage. To this end, Nanny was dismissed earlier than usual, and in twenty minutes after the departure of Bill, Lucretia was wrapped in the deepest slumber.

Mr. William Jones did not succeed quite so well in his search for comfort. After he had been thrust into the gloomy street by Nanny, the thought occurred to him that a mug of hot Tom and Jerry, followed by a strong cigar, would not prove the worst companions in the world to a man in his condition; so he turned toward the Levee and plunged along through the sharp pelting rain, until he came to a celebrated grog-shop, or coffee-house, as they are all termed in the Crescent City—bearing the harmonious

title of the "Pig and Whistle," situated on the old Levee abreast of the vegetable market. He no sooner had placed his hand upon the knob to open the glass door which kept out the wind and rain, and kept in the smoke and slang of the inmates, than his eye fell upon Padilla, disguised again as a fruit merchant, and talking Spanish or Italian to a half dozen grim-looking customers, all with sailors' pea jackets on. Bill paused only an instant with his face close to the glass, but that little moment nearly cost him his life; for Padilla, hearing the knob turning in its rusty socket, threw his skinny eyes toward the door and encountered those of Bill glaring in upon him. The recognition was mutual and instantaneous. Padilla sprang toward the door and Bill toward the market. But this time fortune favored the righteous. Padilla stumbled over the foot of one of his companions and fell prostrate on the floor. This accident caused a delay of half a minute; yet, short as that delay was, Bill made good his escape through the gloom of Ursuline street, and did not halt in his flight until he reached the Planter's Hotel on Canal street near Camp. He rushed into the bar-room—the water running from his cap and cloak in miniature streams—and called for a hot Tom and Jerry, shook himself like some sea monster fresh from the wave, and then cast a rapid glance about the room. It was ten o'clock. Just as he set down his glass a hackman entered and called for a drink. Bill eyed him keenly; and when the fellow had finished his glass, Bill called him to one side, and in a few moments bargained with the driver to carry him to the lake by the Bayou road for ten dollars, and away they started.

In his flight from Padilla, Bill had fully resolved on the course best to pursue. He knew that his treachery to the base Spaniard was discovered, and although he had no personal fear of meeting Padilla, he was horrified by the idea that the discovery might frustrate all the plans of his new mistress. He knew it would be next to an impossibillity to see Lucretia again without being

detected—he could not write, and would not trust another to do it for him—he knew Padilla would have a watch on the mail boat of the next day to cut off his retreat from the city, therefore he had boldly determined to start that very night in the midst of the storm, if money could induce any of the lake oystermen or fishermen to sail.

In an hour and a half he reached the Washington Hotel, at the lake, and succeeded in rousing an acquaintance he had made while pulling Padilla's fruit skiff about on the Mississippi River. Now, this acquaintance was a New York Whitehall oarsman, who had wandered as far as Lake Pontchartrain, where he had at once embraced the profession of fisherman, supplying the various restaurants with soft-shell crabs, crokers, and flounders at prices which enabled him to live (to use his own language) like a fighting-cock. He owned his boat, which was a large skiff with a centre-board; and the indefatigable owner had added an eight-inch plank to each gunwale, and a forecastle reaching aft to the second bow oar—through which a proper hole was cut with a fish-knife to admit a mast carrying a sprit-sail whenever the wind was favorable. The aforesaid forecastle also served as a wardrobe, pantry, and bed-chamber; for Captain Charley Bang, the master and owner of the aforesaid skiff, yclept the American Eagle, disdained any other habitation than the aforesaid "*pride of his heart.*"

Charley Bang was the man for Bill Jones. When the last-named gentleman tumbled into the American Eagle, which was moored by the pickets of the long wharf, Captain Bang was snugly stowed away under his forecastle, sustained on one side by a champagne basket of dried fish, and on the other by a ten-gallon keg filled with spring water from Madisonville. Jugs of liquor, cooking utensils, dried herbs, tobacco boxes, pipes, pepper, salt, dried eelskins (to prevent cramp while bathing), red flannel shirts and pea-jackets were visible in every part of this cabin,

while the sprit-sail was acting the character of bed to the commodore of the craft.

Now, Captain Bang was a man of sober habits, and on this stormy night had retired to his couch early, to toss about on the troubled waters and reflect on the girl he left behind him in Essex street, New York, rather than pass his time in the Arch House, playing dominoes with the Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian gang, who at that period made up the very necessary branch of society that follows the primitive occupation of Saint Peter. Sleep had not yet kissed his eyelids, for the reason, probably, that Boreas had unceasingly and successfully attacked the the cover-lids (pea jackets) of his bed; consequently, when the American Eagle received in her bosom (all water craft are feminine) the very material William Jones, the ungraceful jerking of the little vessel informed the solitary skipper that he was boarded. Without waiting to reflect—and presuming that his visitor must necessarily be a pirate—he seized a large flounder-spear lying beside him, and with amazing facility slid from his cabin, feet foremost, and was fully prepared to harpoon the invader ere Bill had recovered his balance.

"Who's there?" roared the captain, through the storm and darkness; "speak, or I'll drive this here weapon through your liver."

The unequivocal distinctness of this salutation, coupled with the intense darkness of the night, might well startle a man with more nerve than William Jones; who, not being able to distinguish the trunk from which the challenge had escaped, and being extremely anxious to avoid any unpleasant circumstances that might possibly result from the execution of the threat conveyed by the covert marksman, hastened to reply, as thus:

"Why, Bang! you wouldn't skewer me, would you, old feller? Don't you know me, Charley?—old Piddilly's man, Bill Rankin?"

"How the d—l should I know you in this storm and until I heerd you speak? But now that I do know avast a bit till I ship my monkey and sowwester, for t room in my beauty for me and you nairy time; and a you're cum on bizzeness (with emphasis), why, we mu up to the Arch, that's all."

"Well, look alive, my hearty," said Bill, "and it my fault if your next trip ain't the best you've made th winter. So, stir yourself, Bang, for I'm bustin f snifter."

In a few moments these worthy gentlemen found t seated in the Arch House, at a table beside a red-hot s a brace of hot whisky punches before them. Bill was i haste, and in taking a mouthful of punch to clear his t business, he scalded his mouth; but he soon recovered, to the point at once.

"You see, old Drowsy has offered me ten sovereign Mobile by one o'clock to-morrow with a package of let I've got in my pocket. Now as there aint no steambo till four to-morrow afternoon, why you must do the jo and I'll dewide the spile with you. whot do yer say bargain?"

"Vast heavin, Bill Rankin (Captain Bang did not k our Achilles had plunged into a new name); you aint beei Drowsy muff out of nothin, have you?"

"No!" said Bill, "upon the honor of a true man, B on sharp bisniss. I never yet robbed any one of the and if I begin now, when I am better off than ever I —— that's all."

"Give us your fin, Bill, I always liked you from the f as you wos a towney of mine, why, I liked you all th And you shant want for a flying trip while I own th storm or no storm. But if I'm to put out to-night

Mobile by one to-morrow, there's no time to lose, for the wind is soueast and the course to the Regelees (he intended to say Rigolets) is plum east, fur the middle grounds don't stand in the way of my Eagle's bottom or board. So dump your toddy, Bill, and lets be movin."

"Lord love you Bang, I don't mean to lug you clear to Mobile; jist you fetch up at East Pascagooly by daylight or a little after, and a horse and wagon will do the balance in three or four hours. But before we start I'll jist lay in a bottle of something to kill the night air, and a bite to stay the stomach in the young hours of the mornin."

"I don't mind the bottle, Bill, but as for the grub, I've got plenty on board to last a week. I never sail without it; for you see I'm sometimes fastened in the bayous by foul wether, and then I have to perwide for myself out of the skift. So heave ahead with your schnapps while I go on board and light up the signals."

So saying, Captain Bang finished his punch and left the room. Bill was not long in following. The rain had nearly ceased, and the wind had hauled further to the northward. The night was pitch dark, but when Bill reached the Eagle he found three lanterns lighted—the mast and sail set, and all things ready for a start. He entered the little bark this time without falling, and in another minute, she was standing out into the lake on the starboard tack. Not a word was spoken by either of the men until they had made a good mile from the lighthouse on their course.

As the rain slackened, the wind moved a little to the west of north and freshened to such a degree that the sprit was struck —the point of the sail lashed to the mast; and as the breeze came in a little aft the beam, the American Eagle was flying at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour toward the Rigolets with a part of the fortune of our heroine on board.

Captain Bang steered by the compass, and in the management of his little bark, proved himself a very skillful boatman.

Their conversation was mainly about New York and the fun they used to have there. Mr. William Jones was growing more cautious every hour; and although he had every confidence in his friend Bang, he considered it prudent to trust him no further than necessary. About three o'clock in the morning, the weather began to better. The clouds gave way and the stars again displayed themselves above. Bill hailed this as a good omen, and was not a little pleased to hear Capt. Bang say that by starlight he could quicken the trip an hour. And the stars did shine, the wind did settle steadily at the northwest, and at half-past eight in the morning East Pascagoula was bearing east-northeast four miles distant under the weather bow of the gallant Eagle—thus making the run of about eighty miles in less than ten hours.

Landing and procuring a warm breakfast consumed the time necessary to prepare a light wagon and horse to carry Bill up to Mobile. He paid Capt. Bang his five sovereigns, wished the Eagle a safe and quick passage back to the long pier, sprang into the wagon and was soon moving at the rate of twelve miles an hour toward the goal of his ambition.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PARTING.

At the same moment William Jones jumped into his wagon at East Pascagoula, Henry Monthemar rang the door bell of the *Maison Belleville*, and Drowsy Peter ensconsed himself in a cab on his way to Lake Pontchartrain.

Now the object of each of these citizens was immensely interesting to themselves, and in all probability will be found interesting to the reader. The mission of William Jones is tolerably well known, while a true Vermonter might guess the nature of the Viscount Montmorencie's visit at such an early hour; but it would have puzzled Satan himself to have told the precise nature of Padilla's mission to the Lake. However, as I am in all his secrets (I mean Padilla's —not the devil's) the reader shall be posted in due time.

"Dat's his ring," said Nanny, as she sprang from the side of her mistress to be the first to welcome the young lover to his last adieu. "De lord, Miss Chreechy, what a hot hurry dees young men is in when about to go from de object of de heart. De lord, Miss Chreechy, if he ring so hard at de start, he'll pull de bell clean off de hooks when he comes back agin."

With these words she flew out of the room, leaving her mistress with the deepest dye of the rose upon her cheeks. Monthemar's visit was not unexpected, therefore he was seated but a moment when all the ladies of the house were at his side.

The morning was clear and bright, and the cheerful faces and

manners of the party—now joined by M. Belleville himself—at once banished every feeling of regret at parting. At breakfast, which was soon served, Monthemar entertained the party with lively anecdotes, while Elise rallied him on his want of sadness at leaving such an angle as herself behind him. She said she had expected to see his handkerchief to his eyes, and her hand to his lips, during the hour devoted to tearing one's self away; while he, on the contrary, seemed to be in the midst of a jubilee.

She had great doubt of her own future repose, since it was clear she had intrusted her heart to the keeping of a man who did not appear to understand the true value of his charge—a man who can say good bye with a smile on his lip and his eye as free from moisture as if tears had not been invented expressly for such occasions. Then turning to Lucretia, she continued in the same strain, saying she had expected some little show of sympathy from the ladies present, but she was sadly mistaken ;—there was Meg, who did nothing but laugh at her sorrows, which, to say the least, was very unsisterly ; and her dear Chreechy, whom she had made her confidant and adviser in all her affairs of the heart, had suddenly lost her usual eloquence and become a silent observer of the wrongs done to poor little Elise.

No one escaped the blonde beauty on that morning. She was all joy. Her eyes glistened and snapped with each new sally. She seemed determined that Lucretia should find no novelty in her present situation, that Monthemar and love should be as familiar to her ear as household words ; and she succeeded. The entire morning was consumed in general conversation, the party never separating a moment. This was the work of Elise, who had promised Lucretia not to leave her alone till Monthemar had said farewell. Nor was the arrangement in the least unpleasant to him, for he was a true man and an honest lover on principle—having nothing to say to the empress of his heart that demanded the absence of the Bellevilles.

Although Elise had promised not to leave Lucretia, she had determined to tease her as a recompense for her ready compliance.

"Now, pa," said little mischief, "it's of no use making signs to Meg and me to leave the room. I, for one, am not willing to leave that gentleman alone with Chreechy again. He would doubtless begin to look for *pins* and *needles* the moment our backs were turned."

Poor Chreechy had to stand it, though the constant allusion to Monthemar having been detected on his knees before her, kept her bosom in a continual flutter. But Elise entirely failed to produce any such effect on the viscount. The more she struck at him the more and merrier he laughed, until, with sudden gravity, she said she absolutely believed her faithless swain derived pleasure from listening to his own infidelity, and that henceforth she would abandon him to the remorse of his own conscience.

The hours flew too swiftly for Monthemar, for when the old French clock on the mantel struck twelve, he just remembered that the tow, of which his ship made a part, was to start down the river at one o'clock, the captain being under an engagement to take on board fifty hogsheads of sugar at a plantation in the parish of Plaquemines before night.

He started to his feet—the party rose—and crossing to Lucretia, took her hand gently, and said, while the first shade of sadness stole upon his manly features:

"Lucretia, the time is come! I leave you from necessity, but I leave with you an honest heart, and a love as true as ever adorned the character of a man. You have honored me by accepting both (he pressed her hand to his lips), and now honor me by believing that the study of my life shall be to prove myself worthy of your confidence. The separation will not be of long duration, and I leave you with those around whose hearts you have so closely entwined yourself, that the vigilance of their love

will surely preserve you to your lover. (He smiled.) You see I have no injunctions to impose on you—no new promise to exact Full of joy for what I possess in possessing you, confidenc that we will be most happily reunited, like a whispering angel hath robbed this parting of every sorrow." Then drawing fron his coat pocket a curiously wrought cross, richly set with diamond and emeralds, and to which there was affixed an antique chain of gold, he placed it about her neck, saying: "Accept this as a token of my unalterable love. It was given me by a friend of mine and of my father's. Its history is brief, and I'll tell it now. The giver is a noble gentleman, some sixty years of age, who lost a wife and a daughter on whom his love was centred. Chance made me his preserver one day, and he gave me this (it had been his wife's) enjoining me to wear it near my heart until that heart became another's, and then to make it *my* first pledge of love, as it had been his. I accepted the token, and from that hour to this mortal eyes, other than my own, have been strangers to the gem."

"And why don't you add," said Elise, as she circled her ar lovingly about the waist of Lucretia, "And now that Chree has looked upon it, the diamonds have grown much brighter!"

"I would," said Monthemar, taking her disengaged hand kissing it, "if I did not leave my other sweetheart behind me, will say all I wish to say, yet must not."

"Chreechy, dear," said mischief, "don't be jealous, I won him kiss my hand again."

Monthemar took leave of his friends, and we must take of him for some time to come.

Now then for Padilla. On the previous night, when he sa Rankin through the glass door of the "Pig and Whistle," him but a single moment to master the falling off of his en He knew at once that Lucretia was mistress of his intentio tive to the papers and other things in the possession absconded slave, and he well knew the quick intelligenc

mind and the energy of her character, rendered her at least his equal, if not his superior as a tactician. He also knew, or, what is equally as good, thought he knew, that Bill would at once communicate to his new employer the discovery of the night; and as it did not serve his purpose to make a public attack upon Lucretia, he resolved to employ every agency in his power to get hold of Rankin by any means, wrest from him his letter to the New York officers, and if possible, to consign William Rankin to the grave, whence no babbling voice could further spread the dangerous knowledge which that gentleman was certainly master of. Although Padilla was fully aware that Bill could not read, his judgment told him that Lucretia was mistress of that letter's contents, if not of the letter itself.

This thought made him tremble; for although he had not plainly betrayed the secret of the deep injuries he had inflicted upon Lucretia, the articles he had mentioned in that letter would nail him to the wall. He grew almost frantic with rage and disappointed vengeance at the thought, and determined on the destruction of Mr. Rankin in the quickest possible manner. Not a moment was lost by Padilla. The instant he was certain Bill had made good his retreat through the storm and darkness, he summoned to his aid some dozen fellows who knew Rankin as having been in the employ of Drowsy Peter, and dispatched them at once to all the dens where it was possible Bill might seek shelter.

His orders to these men were to take him dead or alive—to search him and carry away every paper found upon his person; and to three or four of these desperadoes he expressed a strong desire that William Rankin should cease to look at the sun. For himself he reserved the task of cutting off Bill's retreat by way of the lake, and for that purpose, was seated in the cab at the moment Bill left Pascagoula and Monthemar entered the Hotel Belleville.

At a little after nine, Padilla reached the lake, and proceeded at once to question all the loafers and fishermen about the fugitive, but gained no information. No one had seen Rankin for a week. He inquired for Captain Bang of the American Eagle, whom he knew to be well acquainted with Bill, but no one could give any information about him. His boat had been seen moored at the wharf after dark, but on a search being made, the American Eagle was found to have left her berth in the night.

To a villain of Padilla's genius this was a strong clew. He saw at once that Rankin had left in the boat of Captain Bang; in what direction, was a perfect mystery to him. However, he argued that Bang must soon return, and money would buy the secret. His alarm that Lucretia should get possession of the evidences of her birth and parentage, and by that means, not only defeat his long-cherished vengeance, but force him to fly from the insulted laws, caused him to lose sight for a moment of the viscount, whose departure for Europe on that very day was a profound secret to him. He knew nothing of the plighted love of Monthemar and Lucretia, yet even from these unsound premises, he correctly concluded she had never disclosed her early intimacy with himself; and now that he remembered having told Lucretia that a very young nobleman had caused his arrest for the murder of her father, he congratulated himself for not having mentioned that nobleman's name.

It was indeed young Monthemar, not yet arrived at full manhood, who heaped on Padilla this last disgrace and imprisonment, and his final banishment from Europe; and it was for this he was pursuing the viscount with all the ferocity of his fiendish nature. He hoped to strike Monthemar through Lucretia, therefore power over the lady was absolutely necessary to the full accomplishment of his base designs. But should Lucretia gain the evidences of her birth and parentage, his power would at once be destroyed; therefore, to defeat the plans of Rankin and Lucre-

tia, touching the New York business, was the all-absorbing theme for his subtle mind. He consulted several Spanish and Maltese fishermen at the lake, telling them that Rankin had robbed him of some two hundred dollars—that he had fled, escaping in the boat of Captain Bang last night in the storm. That he was very anxious to learn at what point Bang had landed his passenger, and would give two ounces of gold to the man who would furnish him with the desired information. He enjoined it upon these fellows to send him the earliest information of the return of the American Eagle to the long wharf. Then, having treated all hands (although it is the business of these men to be constantly on and in the water, they are always dry), he returned to the city to look after Lucretia and her movements.

In the proper time, Bill arrived in Mobile, had his name registered as William Jones, by the clerk—Mr. Jones, having his right hand in a sling, from a wound, was unable to write—took a light dinner, walked to the river, engaged a passage on the steamboat Alabama, for Montgomery, and at six o'clock that same day, or just twenty hours from the moment he encountered Padilla in the Pig and Whistle, was on his way to the place of his appointment, with at least a full day's start of Padilla, should he even attempt to follow.

To do the worthy Mr. Jones justice, the only regret or mortification he endured for having been driven from the Pig and Whistle to Mobile, in such a disagreeable manner, was the idea of his being compelled to fly from a man like Padilla; and on his way to Montgomery, he fully resolved, if Padilla should overtake him there, before Lucretia arrived, he would not avoid the interview, trusting that Padilla would attack him at once, and thereby run the great risk of having his neck cracked in the encounter.

There was nothing inhuman in this reasoning of Bill's, for he knew Padilla to be a base villain now, and he wisely concluded

that if he should break the gentleman's neck, both he and his mistress would have more license to pursue the search in New York. At ten o'clock that night, Captain Bang and the American Eagle arrived at the long wharf.

Monthemar left the Belleville's at a quarter past twelve, and went down the river at one o'clock P.M., same day. At the same hour, Padilla, disguised as Drowsy Peter, was on the sharp look-out at the corner opposite the abode of our heroine. At six o'clock, P.M., same day, as the Bellevilles and Lucretia were about to separate to dress for a soirée that evening, Lucretia, looking very firm but very sad, requested an audience of M. Belleville and his daughters, which was at once accorded. In half an hour she had related every particular of her history, as far as Padilla had made her acquainted with it. To which relation, she added her determination to start on the morrow for New York, by the way of Mobile and Montgomery.

In vain did the kind hearted Belleville expostulate, the affectionate Margaret weep, and our sweet, enthusiastic Elise implore, weep and threaten by turns; Lucretia was resolute, and told her friends they could assist her in the undertaking if they would but consider the necessity for the course of action she had resolved on, and not be alarmed at its dangers. To learn who her parents were, and free herself from the accursed machinations of the infamous Padilla, were to her incentives sufficient to make her undertake the circuit of the world. She owed it to herself, to society, to her generous lover; and no earthly consideration could dissuade her from her resolution.

Then another difficulty arose. Elise declared her readiness to go and *protect* poor Chrecchy, who could not repress the smile and tears that invaded her lips and eyes at these evidences of pure affection. But it was impossible to comply with the wishes of Elise; her presence would be a new cause of solicitude to Lucretia, and the blonde beauty was compelled to submit.

Lucretia then told her friends she knew herself to be strictly watched, and that it was desirable she should start from some other house to escape an immediate pursuit; whereupon it was settled she should dress for the soirée, and attend it with the family; but instead of returning home again, she was to remain all night with their friends, and send home another young lady in her place; that on the morrow, M. Belleville in person could effect all other arrangements. He could send such articles of clothing as Lucretia should lay out that evening, by Nanny, in small parcels to his friend's house, that no trunk might be seen leaving the Hotel Belleville; in the meantime, he could prepare letters of introduction to his friends in New York, to protect her against all chances of evil and want. She was to travel under the assumed name of Miss Alice Vale. M. Belleville was to accompany her to the lake end of the Pontchartrain railroad, and place her in charge of the captain of the boat for Mobile. The young sisters Belleville were to remain at home all day, and show themselves frequently at the windows, that not the least suspicion might be awakened in the mind of Padilla, as to the real state of the case. All these precautions were necessary to baffle Padilla, who, she felt certain, was watching every movement about the house.

Matters being thus arranged, the ladies were soon *en costume* for the soirée. The carriage was announced at half-past eight P.M., the party descended the marble steps of the mansion, entered the coach, laughing as merrily as if nothing more than the soirée itself occupied their thoughts.

Away flew the coach, and away flew Drowsy Peter, after it on foot; fortunately for Peter, there were but few squares to travel, or he would have been distanced. However, he arrived in time to see the ladies alight and enter the illuminated saloon.

"Pshaw!" said Padilla, "it's only a soirée after all. Now, probably I have assumed all this trouble and anxiety for nothing. It is more than likely Rankin has simply stolen the money I in-

trusted to his care, and that I will never hear of him again. There certainly is no deception in this entertainment, and Lucretia was laughing with the others on entering the coach. I begin to think the spirit of revenge that burns in my heart is softening my brain. I grow nervous and suspicious, and yet there is something whispers me to be wary. Rankin's return is certainly indicative that he has abandoned my interest, and yet I would be sworn, the fellow is no thief; at all events, I will be on the alert. Let me see—at eleven to night, my watchmen at the lake are to meet me at the Pig and Whistle, touching the return of Captain Bang. I don't like that man; he and Rankin are fellow townsmen—the one a prize-fighter, and the other a Whitehall oarsman; rude and uncultivated, but with quick wit, daring courage, and a pride in what they call honesty; I look for little information from Captain Bang. However, I'll not lose my chance for want of watching. Monthemar should be here to-night to wait upon his lady love, home. Well, I will be at Belleville's house in time to note who may return there. And now for the Pig and Whistle."

So saying, he left the illuminated mansion, and soon found himself in the famous coffee-house opposite the market. The clock was striking eleven as he entered the bar-room, and he had hardly looked about him when in came three of his lake watchmen in company with the renowned Captain Bang, in proper person.

That worthy man no sooner saw Padilla—or Drowsy Peter, as this branch of his friends and acquaintances knew him—than he walked straight up to him, extended his hand, and said: "Well, Peter, my boy, what's in the wind now to make you offer two ounces for a little information, hey?"

"How do you know I offered money for any information?" said Peter.

"Why, from these deegoes, who, I take it, is all friends of yourn. They come fiddling about me to know ware I tuk Bill

Rankin, so I smelt a mice in a minnit and asked 'em, what would they give to know? So, one word brung on another, till at last they cum out flat-footed and said you'd give two ounces to know. Them's the fax, my boy."

"Well, say that these fellows have spoken truth, have you the information required?—if so, out with it, and here's your money." With these words Padilla drew a greasy purse from an inside pocket and displayed two doubloons. "Come, what do you say—is it a bargain?"

"Well, it is, hoss," said Bang, taking the gold in his hand and sounding each piece on the counter to test its purity, and then putting them in his pocket. "Now, what do you want to know?"

"Did you carry Rankin off last night?"

"I did, my boy."

"Where did you land him, and when?"

"I landed him at a little past eight, this morning, at Pascagooly."

At this last reply of Captain Bang, Padilla jumped as if he had been struck by a rocket; but recovering himself at once, continued his questions: "Well, where did he go then?"

"I don't know—stop! yes I do, too. He got in a wagon and rode off."

"Did he say nothing to you?"

"Yes; he sed, 'Good bye, Bang, and a safe return to the long wharf;' and then he rode away."

"Did you not guess he had been robbing me?" said Peter.

"I gess I didn't. Besides, Peter, you musn't tell me nor nobody else that Bill Rankin's been stealin. I know him, my boy, and a more honester feller never cum from the Empire City. So keep a sharp look-out over your jaw-line, my hearty, or I'll take in the slack a *leetle* faster than you can pay it out, that's all."

Now, this Captain Bang was a rough customer, and as it was no part of Padilla's villainous programme to involve himself in a fight from which he must have emerged perfectly subdued, he said :

"Well, well, I intended no offence to you, Mr. Bang ; on the contrary I feel much obliged to you for the promptness with which you told me all you know on the subject."

"Now you cum back again to fust principles. I did tell you the rale God's truth of the matter, and if I was to say anything more, why I'd jist be tellin a blasted lie, that's all. But come, since things is all ship-shape once more, let's all take a pig, or punch, for I'm bound to sleep on board of the Eagle this night, if there's a cab to be had in this blessed city."

Bang's invitation was accepted—the party separated ; Bang to find his way back to the lake and Padilla to watch for the return of the party to Belleville's house ; nor did he wait long. It was not yet midnight when the carriage rolled up to the door, and he saw the same three ladies (as he thought) and M. Belleville enter the house. But as Monthemar was at that moment rapidly approaching the Balize, he was not one of the party. Padilla, in total ignorance of the events of the last forty hours, and completely blinded by the clever stratagem of Lucretia, placed no value on the circumstance of Monthemar's absence, and retired to his brilliant lodgings to further canvass the conduct and probable intentions of William Rankin, who was at that moment some ninety miles up the Alabama River, on his way to Montgomery.

The Belleville's were all sad. What they considered the wild scheme of Lucretia, had filled them with vague apprehensions for her safety. Elise lodged with Margaret that night, but they did not retire until they had neatly packed in small parcels such articles of dress as were required by their dearly beloved governess and sister ; while M. Belleville wrote several letters to as

many influential friends of his in New York, telling them the nature of her attempt to recover the stolen articles, but without relating any particulars of his adopted daughter's history. In the strongest terms he urged them to watch over her safety and to furnish any means that might be required for the success of her mission.

CHAPTER VIII.

SANDY MC CULLOCH.

THE following morning dawned with her sweetest or rather her brightest smile. Monthemar crossed the bar at the southwest pass of old Mississippi, on his way to Havre; Padilla entered the passenger cars of the Pontchartrain railroad train, bound for the lake; M. Belleville entered the front door of the temporary residence of Lucretia, and the breakfast bell roused Mr. William Jones from his slumber in the state room of the steamer Alabama; and it was just eight o'clock in the morning.

Padilla proceeded to pump Captain Bang as to the movements of Bill Rankin, and not being able to accomplish anything in that way, left the lake for the city, in the two o'clock P.M. train.

M. Belleville and Lucretia finished all their arrangements, and at two o'clock P.M., started from her friend's house in his carriage, for the lake, to reach the steamer Southerner, to leave for Mobile, at three o'clock precisely; so that within twenty minutes after Padilla had gained his lodgings on his return from the lake, M. Belleville and Lucretia, deeply veiled, were safely in the ladies' cabin of the Southerner. And at three o'clock P.M. when Padilla stationed a fresh spy on the opposite corner to the house of Belleville, the stern line of the Southerner was cast off and she began to move swiftly on her course toward the Rigolets.

After Padilla had placed his spy, he retired to his home; but M. Belleville stood upon the wharf, watching the receding vessel and returning the salutations of a white handkerchief that anon fluttered from the cabin window. Large tears rolled down his cheeks, his bosom swelled with inexpressible sensations of dreadful foreboding, and he trembled in every limb as the outline of the steamer became more indistinct. The glorious character of the mind and heart of Lucretia had so entangled his feelings that had she in reality been his own daughter, he could not have felt more keenly the separation.

He remained watching the vessel until distance sunk her in the eastern, and the sun first kissed the western, wave of the lake; and then with a heavy heart and a mind more troubled than it had been since his wife's demise, he reëntered the coach and returned to its master's house.

Noble fellow! he little needed the scenes he endured at his own home to make him wretched. He reached his door and was about to ring the bell, when he changed his mind and concluded to let himself in by a pass-key which he carried, for he really felt ashamed to meet his daughters, as if he had been guilty of some great wrong in letting Lucretia depart; and he no sooner commenced to insert his key in the lock than the door was suddenly opened and Nanny seized him by the hand, dropped upon her knees, and, in a burst of anguish that would have wrung a far sterner heart than his, implored him to give her back her mistress.

Escaping from the faithful, affectionate girl the best way he could, he hastened to the library to conceal himself from his daughters, never doubting that they were in their rooms; but on entering, he was startled yet more by finding Margaret upon a sofa, weeping audibly, and Elise, seated in a large arm-chair, in a perfectly upright attitude, her hands firmly clasped, her eyes fixed upon a portrait of Lucretia hanging on the opposite wall, her

lips compressed, and her face as white, and cold, and passive as that of a statue.

So intense were the feelings that momentarily entranced the sisters, that neither noticed M. Belleville when he entered. All the vitality of Elise was absorbed by the image before her, and she gazed upon it as in mute desolation, from having parted with the original forever.

The same portrait (Elise and Margaret had gone to the library to look upon the shadow of her whom they might never more behold) had affected Margaret quite differently. She no sooner had fixed her eyes upon the enchanting face, than all the gentleness, worth, and love of Lucretia burst upon her pure mind and heart with fresher beauty than ever; and for the first time feeling the extent of her loss, had fallen upon the sofa, where in all probability sleep alone would have relieved her suffering soul, had not her father determined to disturb a too deep indulgence of such exquisite sorrow.

Crossing to the sofa, he touched Margaret gently on the shoulder. She turned to him languidly, but spoke not. He pointed to Elise with such an appealing look, that Margaret, fully understanding his feelings, rose from the couch, and wiping the tears from her swollen eyes, placed her arm around the neck of her sister, and said kindly: "Come! Elise dear, let us retire to our chamber. Pa is returned, and will tell us all the news in the morning." Elise rose from her seat, gazed earnestly at her sister and father, with an expression of such mute misery seated upon her features, that M. Belleville's heart received a deeper wound than if her grief had found vent in tears. Without speaking a syllable, she permitted Margaret to lead her to her room, and put her to bed like a child. And there she lay, enshrouded in love and sorrow, speechless and passive as marble. An occasional sigh escaping from her bosom was all the sign of life she gave; for the suddenness of Lucretia's departure, and the violent effort she had been

compelled to make on the previous evening (for all their mirth on entering the coach had been assumed) had created such a violent reaction in her nervous system, that volition was for a time suspended. At length she breathed more freely, and, stretching her snowy arms toward her sister, whose neck she clasped, and drew her head down upon the pillow, said in a husky voice :

"Dear Meg, we have lost her forever." The spasm was past, and tears came bubbling from their surcharged fountain, washing from her over-burdened heart a terrible weight of woe.

It is ever thus with virtue and with pure penitence. Tears are the true harbingers from the angel spirit within. As the fragrant dewdrop from the rosy fingers of Aurora revives the withering flower, such tears uplift the drooping soul and bring us nearer to our God.

That Elise should be so affected by the departure of Lucretia in such a strange and sudden manner, will not be considered surprising, when we remember the years she had been under the immediate influence of our heroine. When she first entered the family of M. Belleville, Elise was but a child, with a rich mind, and humor as sparkling as unrestrained mirth and a rather precocious temperament could fashion. Lucretia had early possessed herself of a perfect knowledge of all the good traits of her charming pupil, and by means of her own impressive powers, adorned as they were by gentle, loving firmness, she soon became mistress of the little fairy intrusted to her care.

For two years previous to the coming of Lucretia, Margaret had been at a celebrated academy for young ladies, in Virginia ; and this fact also had a great tendency to leave the sunny girl with a sufficient void in her heart, in which a spirit like that of Lucretia could find repose ; and, at the moment our history began, Elise had found it impossible to live out of her society. I do not mean to say that Elise loved her father or sister less, by loving Lucretia so much, but to the latter she had learned to look for

counsel, and for more extenuation of her girlish fancies than to the other two. Her mind had been directed in the proper channels so skillfully, that she rapidly acquired knowledge without seeming to study; and her heart being of the purest caste, very naturally clove to the object that promoted at once her advancement and happiness.

Sleep, "Nature's sweet restorer," at last settled on her weary eyelids, and the maiden slept; and only then did the watchful Margaret seek her own couch.

I must now leave the Bellevilles to their slumbers, while I pay a nocturnal visit to the chamber of Don Pedro Nuñez Padilla. The house and the room are the same in which his last interview with Lucretia occurred, and on which occasion Mr. Rankin let fall his awful "*left*" on the "*mug*" of the expatriated grandee of Spain.

There sat Padilla on the very chair Lucretia had occupied, with his feet, cased in soft velvet slippers, resting on the brass fender in front of the fire. A small rosewood inlaid table stood in reach of his right hand, on which stood a decanter of rich Spanish wine and several glasses. Padilla was *en robe de chambre*, with the addition of a bright yellow satin sash around his waist, heavily fringed at the ends.

Above the topmost folds of that sash, the close observer could have seen the curiously wrought silver-mounted handle of a pistol and about as much of a dagger, the workmanship of which seemed to be of the same style. If you will look beneath the window curtains, and into the hall, you will find the window shutters and hall-door heavily barred.

Now all these precautions seemed to indicate a sense of insecurity that honest men would find unbearable, were they situated as Padilla was at that moment—that is, in his own house in a good city. But we shall see that this gentleman never did anything without a real or imaginary reason. That the reader may

be not in the least mystified by the character of this man, let me repeat distinctly, that the low order of people with whom we have frequently found him on terms of equality, were entire strangers to him in his real character of Padilla, our friend Bill Rankin having been made a single exception to this rule. Even the spies he employed in the character of Drowsy Peter, were compelled to report to Drowsy Peter at a stated hour, either in the Pig and Whistle coffee-house, or in the dancing saloon of the Washington Ball, in which place he invariably wore a mask and domino, and was so perfectly disguised that his own emissaries were compelled to wander up and down the room until the preconcerted signal was hissed in their ears by their snake-like employer.

He also paid liberally for all services rendered to him; and since he had abandoned the banana and cocoanut trade, his ample supply of gold had been a source of speculation to his market and levee acquaintances, and many had been the anxious inquiries about the fixed place of his abode. Now, in order that the reader may not be any longer in doubt touching the source of his wealth it will be enough for me to tell him, that the house in which he is now seated is the one from which his slave woman, Alice, ran off with the dressing-case containing the undeniable evidences of Lucretia's parentage. Padilla had purchased it many years before our history begins, during the time he left Cuba for New Orleans, to place Lucretia in the Depassos' family, as related in the second chapter; and he had skillfully concealed a vast amount of treasure there, in such a manner that even if the house had been consumed during his absence, none but the devil or himself could ever have found it.

The runaway slave, Alice, had been placed there in charge as Padilla's housekeeper. At the end of two years, Lucretia had reached the age of twelve—still living with the Depassos'. Padilla, being resolved to visit his native land, had provided for Lucretia. He also provided, through the same agent, to pay

Alice, the slave, who was to remain in the house till his return, a certain sum monthly for her support, while his agent was to look after the property and the slave in the event of accident of any kind. He had promised this woman her freedom on his return; but as circumstances delayed him years for the months he expected to be absent, Alice concluded that she had better take French leave.

This slave woman had frequently seen Lucretia at Depasso's, when sent there by Padilla with some little present; for, as he related to our heroine in the second chapter, his hatred had burnt out, and when he left her at Depasso's, he really intended never to trouble her again. And you know how that hatred had been revived. Well, Padilla not having returned in the time specified, Alice began to think he never intended to set her free, and ran away, carrying with her this curiously inlaid dressing-case, in the belief that it contained money or valuables, since she had found it hidden in a secret drawer in a cabinet. In the meantime the agent had rented the premises until Padilla did return. So much for explanation.

Well, there sat Peter, mumbling to himself, with his usual sleepy look. At length the clock struck ten. His face changed at once to all the fierce illumination of a hungry panther. Glancing at the clock, then stretching his neck forward, as if to catch a certain sound approaching the house, he filled a glass with wine and sipped it with as much satisfaction as if he were really at a convivial party, with a light heart and a clear conscience. He was waiting for a guest, who soon came. Presently a slight knock was heard at the door of the room in which he sat, and on being told to come in, the slave who had admitted Lucretia on the night of her interview with Padilla, entered, and in a low, respectful voice, said:

"De man wid de red whiskers is down to de back door, master Pedro."

"Bring him up to this room at once, Milly. But stop. Has he an overcoat on?"

"Yes, master."

"Now, Mark me well, Milly. Tell him to hang up his overcoat and hat in the hall downstairs; and when he does so, do you watch him sharply, and see if he takes any knife, dagger, or pistol from the pocket; and if he does, and the weapon should be a knife or dagger, take *one* cigar out of that glass; if it should be a pistol, take *two* cigars, and if you see no weapon at all, leave the room at once, after he enters it. Now, do you understand me, Milly?"

"Yes, master Pedro; Milly's no fool by dis time—no, indeed, she isn't."

And Milly had not been absent more than three minutes before a heavy footstep was heard mounting the stair leading to the back room on the lower floor of the house. Short as her absence was, however, Padilla had time to examine the caps of his pistol, and replace it before the tread reached the door of his room. He also filled a glass with wine, and was in the act of sipping the bright, rich liquid, in a negligent manner, when the door opened, and Milly entered, followed by the visitor. Milly's face wore a very cunning expression, which was not lost on her master, and as soon as the stranger was seated opposite Padilla, she went to the mantel and took *four* cigars from the glass, and left the room without speaking, closing the door after her. Padilla's instructions to the negress were to take two cigars if she saw the stranger with a pistol, and she had taken *four*. Coupling that fact with the cunning look she gave him on entering, Padilla concluded his *vis-à-vis* was accompanied by a brace of pistols instead of one; and this time his penetration was rewarded.

"Well, Sandy," said Padilla, "we meet again, although it's not on the deck of a slaver."

"Ah! Captain Pawdilly," replied the stranger. "Ony mon

having (now the reader must remember that the letter A, in the word having or have, was invariably sounded by this descendant of the royal Stuarts, as the A is properly sounded in *shave* or *shaving*) slipped awa from the mony perils we have shouldered through tegither, has a right to expect the pleesant condition I find ye in, after a life of toil and trubble."

I will introduce this person to the reader, who doubtless will remember to have seen several of them in his time. Andrew McCulloch, or Sandy McCulloch, as he was called by those who had the honor of his acquaintance, was from the land o' cakes. He was about six feet two inches high, large frame, spare in flesh, red whiskers, hair like Cayenne pepper and salt mixed, yellow eyebrows, pale blue eyes with large snuff-colored spots on them. There were three large yellow teeth left standing in the centre of his lower jaw, and four at regular intervals in his upper jaw, presenting themselves to view whenever his mouth was open; and as he constantly adorned that large, coarse feature with a grin while speaking to you, these masticatory engines were constantly clattering in the face of his auditor. The complexion of his face and hands was of a delicate saffron hue, and might have been considered quite becoming had it not been for the shower of light salmon-colored freckles that invaded its purity. Sandy was about fifty-five years old; had probably left his native glens to save his neck from the gibbet; had found his way to Jamaica, in which island his abolition principles had been confirmed, while he was making a living by setting sugar kettles (he being a brick-mason by trade) for those few planters who had not yet become totally ruined by the action of the negro philanthropists in the British senate. But honest labor and Sandy McCulloch were destined to remain as they had always been, *dead enemies*, or enemies to the death; for, on the arrival of Captain Padilla at the south side of the island to take in some fresh water on his first voyage as *captain* to the west coast of Africa, McCulloch found

it expedient to enter on board the slaver as a green hand, since he was already in possession of more silver and gold—belonging to the planter on whose estate he was at the time hard at work laying brick and stealing—than would justly compensate him for the valuable time he had consumed there. Being a true Scotchman, he was true to no interest but his own; and consequently sacrificed the interests of his employer with no more scruple than his more illustrious countrymen and ancestors had sold their country, its heroes, and its kings whenever the inducement was large enough. Sandy had studied some books, and had amassed a considerable amount of information, which, added to the fact that he was very loquacious and an unscrupulous scoundrel, soon made him a favorite of Padilla's, and ship's clerk consequently. He quickly reconciled the slave-trade with his conscience and abolitionism by the logic, that it was far better to take the poor devils to any country than to leave them in their own to be eaten up by the victorious gang of niggers who had first enslaved their countrymen.

How far Sandy's logic might have affected the noble Duke of Sutherland—at that time some twenty-five years younger than when he took Mistress Harriet Beecher Stowe under his patronage as the author of "Uncle Tom"—is not distinctly known; but on board the slaver of Captain Padilla it was considered a masterly display of rhetoric, and Sandy was pronounced a trump card by his companions.

In time, however, the natural spirit of his race rose into a rebellion against the majesty of Padilla's law. The captain having discovered some false entries made by the honest Scot, Padilla charged him with the villainy, and the descendant of Monteith as stoutly maintained his innocence. Rough words followed, until Padilla called him an infernal Scotch swindler, to which Sandy had replied, he could not be charged with stealing niggers, at any rate. At which Padilla rejoined that Sandy was a mutinous

terrier, and deserved punishment, at the same time unsheathing his cutlass (an instrument he constantly wore on board), aimed a desperate blow at the head of Sawney, who, being less brave than Wallace, and more cautious than the first Stuart, by a sudden dodge averted the full effects of the blow, and saved his head entire with the exception of a slight diminution of his organ of ideality.

When Sandy revived, he was heard to say, the time would come when he could pay back with interest the mark of flattering attention the captain had bestowed on him. When that voyage was ended, McCulloch left the vessel, though Padilla had offered some inducement for him to remain; for the low cunning of the Scotchman was as useful to Padilla as the bravery of a better man would have been. But Sandy persisted in abandoning the slave-trade, and settled down in Havana to speculate on the plunder his thrift had accumulated. Since that time, they had met but once before this night, and that once was on the night Padilla and Bill Rankin encountered at the Pig and Whistle.

Padilla had extended his hand, and McCulloch had shaken it cordially. The idea had instantly entered Padilla's brain, that Sandy would prove a most excellent successor to Mr. Rankin, and immediately invited him to call at his house, telling the gallant Scot he might make something handsome if they could agree to terms. Sandy had agreed to call at the time specified, took the direction of Padilla's house, and parted company for the night.

Both these men well remembered the past. The Scotchman hated the Spaniard for two reasons; first, because his cunning roguery had failed against the jealous vigilance of the captain, and, secondly, because the bald spot on the right centre of his head, constantly reminded him that the blood of the McCullochs was yet to be avenged.

Padilla, on the other hand, entertained the most sovereign contempt for Sandy, yet knowing him to be as malicious and revengeful as he was mean and cowardly, he concluded it would be the surest plan to conduct his interview under arms. Thus, then, both had armed themselves—Padilla, for the reason just stated, and McCulloch, with the intention of satisfying his revenge, provided the opportunity presented itself of doing so without a large risk of detection, and a fine prospect of making some *siller* at the same time.

"You are right, Sandy," said Padilla, in reply to his remarks, "I am in pleasant circumstances. But that's nothing wonderful when it is remembered what a jewel of a clerk and supercargo I had for some time."

This last remark of Padilla's extended the habitual grin that adorned Sandy's features, though the allusion to his thieving propensities acted as a new spur to his hatred and desire for revenge. He answered rather impudently:

"Coptin Pawdilly, I niver did the wrong you charged upon me. Ye listened to the lies of a jealous set o' d——d nigger thieves ye kept company with, to find an excuse to fill my office with another. Upon the land ye wouldna dare to thripp it to my face that I had plundered the brig to the value of an iron ruffle."

While Sandy was speaking, his right had worked and twitched nervously toward the breast pocket of his coat, while Padilla also thought it necessary to unmask the butt of his pistol from the folds of his sash, and play with it carelessly with the fingers of his right hand. Sandy saw the motion and the tool, and in an instant the better part of valor took possession of his white heart and all his resolutions for revenge vanished, as he continued thus:

"But come, coptin, let's leave the past wi' its sins, and think only of the preesant. That seems to be a rich wine you have in the decanter there, and if ye're not grown less hospitable than

you were on board the brig, ye'll push the bottle this way; 'twill not be the first time I've warmed my throttle with your country's nectar."

Padilla, who saw in an instant that the Caledonian was vanquished, and that his own indomitable will and determination retained the mastery of Sandy, as in the time of their companionship on board the slaver—acted as if he had suspected nothing, and pushed the decanter and a glass toward him, saying:

"You are right again, my gallant Scot. I am none the less hospitable now than I used to be. Come, fill your glass and pass the bottle, and then we will proceed to business"

They filled and drank—Sandy re-filled thrice and drank in quick succession, smacking his coarse lips in rude ecstasy at the fruity flavor of the rich liquor—sending forth a sigh from his huge breast as each glass disappeared, which spake him at least an ardent lover, if not a connoisseur of fine wine. When Sandy's terror at the sight of Padilla's weapon had subsided, and his bosom began to glow under the influence of the wine he had swallowed, he wisely concluded his hour of vengeance had not yet arrived—that by temporizing with his old captain, he might render the future success of his scheme a fixed fact. This was a wise conclusion; for it opened a new field of enterprise on which the genius of the Celt had never yet displayed itself, while the promised reward for success tended greatly to alleviate a certain uneasiness he experienced about that time occasioned by the low ebb of his fortune—his Havana speculations having proved disastrous to such an extent, that a quiet, unostentatious exodus from Cuba had been deemed necessary for the preservation of his health and the free exercise of his limbs in some other sphere for action.

Padilla soon related the treason of Bill Rankin and the necessity for leaving a shrewd agent in New Orleans, while he himself should proceed at once to New York, for the purpose of

obtaining the box of evidences he so much desired to possess. Without intrusting any important branch of his secret intentions to McCulloch, he engaged the worthy Celt in the following capacity:

Sandy was to reside in Padilla's house, and be amply supplied with all the comforts of life—a chamber was assigned him for his exclusive use—he was to be waited on as a valued guest of the Spaniard, and his sole employment was to be a sharp watch on the movements of Lucretia and the Belleville family generally. In the event of their leaving town, he was to follow them to their new location, and send the earliest intelligence to Padilla in New York. And should he succeed in keeping our heroine under his surveillance until Padilla's return, he was to receive a thousand dollars for his services.

Thus, this meeting of old friends which commenced so inauspiciously, terminated to their mutual satisfaction. The next day was fixed for the departure of Padilla, whose guaranty for Sandy's good faith was, first: the promised reward, and secondly, the removal of all his valuables—papers, plate, jewels, and money, to a place of perfect security; for the Spaniard well knew that neither locks nor bolts would be held sacred by the enterprising coadjutor he was calling into service.

Milly, too was publicly instructed to serve him as she would her master, and *privately* instructed to watch him as a cat would a rat (no bad simile either). After Sandy had finished the bottle and smoked several cigars (for the character of welcome guest was donned in a moment), he rose, extended his hand to Padilla with all the cordial warmth of a true-hearted man—bade the Spaniard good night, and departed to his lodgings in ecstasies at his reviving fortunes, and the excessive cleverness he had displayed in completely hoodwinking his old captain at last; for Sandy had no doubt of reaping a rich harvest in the mansion of his employer by the simple arithmetical rule of subtraction.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PURSUIT.

"ALL the world's a stage!" and Sandy McCulloch and Captain Padilla were star actors in their peculiar lines. They were well certified in all the mysteries of entrées and exits, while, as trap workers, they were perfect *Vanderdeckens*. On the morning following the interview at the close of the last chapter, these artists appeared just opposite the mansion of M. Belleville. Of course, Padilla was disguised, while Sandy was costumed with all his native graces. A short consultation was held by these gentlemen, when Padilla went off, leaving Sandy on guard to saunter about the vicinity until dinner-time, when he was to receive his final instructions from his employer.

The front portion of the Hotel Belleville was closed, and as no one was seen to enter or leave the premises but a servant-man, Sandy had but a short report to make on reaching his new home. It is true that he had accosted the servant spoken of, from whom he had learned that one of the young ladies was ill, and this was the cause assigned for keeping the house closed. At two o'clock, all arrangements having been perfected, Padilla started to the lake, and at three o'clock the fastenings of the steamer Caroline were cast off, and Padilla commenced his voyage to New York exactly twenty-four hours later than Lucretia. Never dreaming that his intended victim was one day's march in advance of him, and on the same errand with himself, he gave himself up to reflec-

tion, entirely subduing every emotion of the anxiety which fired his bosom.

On went the Caroline, and at seven in the morning of the following day, Pedro Nuñez Padilla landed in Mobile, while Lucretia—who had been lucky enough to find a boat starting for Montgomery at ten o'clock on the previous morning—was two-thirds of the distance on her journey; and our old friend, Boxer Bill Rankin, *alias* William Jones, was eating his breakfast in the hotel at Montgomery, anxious to reach the river-bank, and look out sharp for the first boat up from Mobile. But no boat came by dinner-time. Poor Bill became anxious—restless—lost his appetite, and resolved on a hot whisky punch and a biscuit for dinner.

The next day, after finishing his dinner, he once more mounted a pile of cotton-bales on the river-bank, and strained his eyes and ears to catch the first smoke, or roar of the escape-pipe of the long wished for boat. At last his fidelity was rewarded. Beyond the lowest point or bend of the river visible from his station, a thin cloud of smoke was seen approaching, and soon after, the roaring of the escaping steam gave intelligence to his delighted ears that his charming mistress was at last approaching; for Bill had not the least doubt of Lucretia's being on the first boat that should arrive on *this* day, because it was the *third* of his sojourn in Montgomery, and she had promised to be but two days behind him. But Mr. William Jones had forgotten he had left New Orleans at least eighteen hours in advance of the regular conveyance.

The boat came; and, long before a landing could be effected, the lynx eye of Mr. Jones had singled out the form of our heroine amidst a group of passengers who had gathered on the hurricane deck of the vessel to get a view of the city and surrounding country, as the boat neared its destination.

Nor did the manly figure of Mr. Jones, standing erect on a six-

tier stack of cotton-bales, long remain unnoticed. Lucretia saw him, and was at once relieved from a considerable anxiety; for although the true steel of her own character fully fitted her to travel safely from one end of the States to the other, she yet felt a deeper sense of security in the companionship of her stalwart serving-man, in whose honesty and fidelity she had the fullest confidence.

A number of carriages had gathered around, and Bill immediately chartered the finest-looking one for his mistress and her baggage; so that when Lucretia landed, and had rewarded her faithful servant with one of her sweetest smiles of approval, she was at once seated in the coach, while Bill mounted with the driver; and in ten minutes more, she found herself seated in a neat private parlor of the hotel. Bill had left nothing unthought of, as will be seen. The moment Lucretia had removed her hat and veil, a tidy chambermaid entered respectfully and inquired if *Madame Vale* (her travelling name) would have her warm bath prepared before taking some refreshment (stating at the same time that this little parlor opened into her chamber, and that the bath-room was immediately adjoining); that her steward, Mr. Jones, had ordered everything to be in readiness, and she flattered herself that madame would find all his orders had been strictly obeyed.

Lucretia smiled her thanks for so much attention, and told Nancy, the maid, that she wished to give some instructions to her steward before retiring to her chamber, and requested that Mr. Jones should be sent to her at once. Nancy obeyed, and Bill made his appearance with his hat in his hand.

"Sit down, William," said Lucretia, "and tell me all that occurred since we parted last."

Bill looked a blank, twisted his hat a little, gazed at the carpet, and coughed a little. He did not feel quite right, because he did not know what effect his encounter with Padilla was to

have on his mistress. He felt as if his desire to get that hot Tom and Jerry at the Pig and Whistle was the whole cause of the disaster, and in his anxiety for the safe arrival of Lucretia, he had quite forgotten to frame his story so that he might not stumble in the relation of it. He intended to tell the truth, but he wanted to tell it in a manner most favorable to himself; for he absolutely began to fear a discharge for this blunder at the very outset of his new career. However, after clearing his throat several times, and nothing but the plain, unvarnished facts presenting themselves to his embarrassed mind and feelings, he told all that had happened in regular order of the events.

Lucretia showed evident signs of uneasiness as he proceeded, and when he finished, she remained silent for some minutes, buried in reflection. Bill hardly breathed; and as Lucretia's eyes were fixed upon the floor, he stole a sidelong glance at her face to read if possible the resolution she was evidently coming to. He saw nothing to relieve his anxiety, for her features had gradually assumed a stern character, her lips were compressed and her brow was slightly contracted. These signs made Mr. Jones shake a little. He thought he saw a storm brewing that was to burst on his big head. He was soon relieved of his uneasiness by a sudden return of pleasant animation to the face of his mistress, who, raising her head and regarding him not unkindly, said:

"William, your unfortunate meeting with Padilla on the night I last saw you, has occasioned me some alarm. I am convinced, that having discovered your faithlessness to his cause, he will at once undertake the journey to New York himself, and that too with the least possible delay. The importance of that dressing-box and contents to the success of his villainy, is of such magnitude to him, that he will sacrifice everything but his life to obtain it. We must move with the greatest rapidity and caution. At what hour in the morning do the cars start for Atlanta?"

Bill, who had posted himself on all these matters, answered promptly:

"At six o'clock, mam. But don't you think, mam, that you've got one day's start of him even if he should be on our track?"

"I am certain that I have at least a day's start from New Orleans," said Lucretia; "but if he should have taken the mail route by the way of Stockton on the morning following my departure from Mobile, he must arrive here by daylight in the morning, and in full time to take the cars for Atlanta with us."

"Oh! if that's all, mam, you needn't be a bit afraid of old Piddilly overhaulin us."

"Why so?"

"Because you see, mam, in these three days I've bin here—and the longest ones I ever seen—I've bin pickin up all the noose I could find. I went down to the railroad station and got to talkin with some of the hands about travellin and they asked me how I cum up from Mobile, and when I sed by the river, they said I wos smart; for, sed they, the mail road was in the *blastedest* (I beg your pardon) worst condition in the world, and that although they had six horses to every coach, there hadn't bin a mail through in time for the train since two weeks before Chrismis. Besides all that, mam, I'll be on the look out at the stage-office soon in the morning, and if he *does* manage to get along in time, why, as there's no help for it, *down goes his house*, that's all."

Notwithstanding the anxiety that was pressing upon her, Lucretia was forced to smile at the rough-and-ready expedient of her herculean serving-man for delaying her adversary in his pursuit; for although she might not have exactly understood how Padilla's "*house going down*," was to delay him on his journey, from the language of Mr. Jones, she fully understood his meaning by the gesture that accompanied it.

"No! William," said Lucretia, "we must avoid all violence

until we have the papers and jewels; and *then* we can place the officers of the law on his track."

"Why you see, mam, that's all werry well as you say—when we get the papers and jewels; but how in the name of righteous *are* we to *git* the things, while that devil is sticking to us like a shadder. Why, mam, 'taint no wiolence to lay up that willain. Aint he done you a mortal injury? aint you willin to hand him over to justice? Aint he tried to take my life? and aint I a right to stop any man from doin a unlawful act? why to be sure I have. Why, mam, I'd think no more of pitching Piddilly from the biler deck of a steamboat plum in the river, than I would of killin a rat."

Lucretia then dismissed him with instructions to engage two seats for the morning train—to see everything in readiness for an early start, and to be within call about the hotel during the evening and night; to be guarded at every point. The last part of her instructions she might have spared, for Bill returned before dark, and had any one noticed his vigilance, he would have thought some state prisoner of importance was confined about the premises.

Lucretia had taken her bath, eaten a light supper and written a letter to the Bellevilles by nine o'clock, at which hour she retired to gather all the rest she possibly could, the better to endure the fatigues of constant travel. At about the same hour, as Bill was pacing up and down the sidewalk by the ladies' entrance to the hotel like a sentinel, Nancy came to the door and in a low voice said:

"I say, Mr. Jones, the madame has gone to bed, so there is no use of your standing out in the cold any longer. Besides, I have another of those hot punches that you like, and some cold venison and jelly in my little linen room, and if you are a mind to, just come in and we can pass a pleasant hour while you finish the story you began the other night."

"Are you sure, Nancy, that madame is in bed for certain, and that I shan't be wanted any more?"

"Quite sure."

"Then I'm your man," said Bill; and without any more ado, he entered the house with Nancy to enjoy her supper and gratify her love for the marvellous by some of his Munchausen stories, a facility for which Mr. Jones possessed to a remarkable degree when in the humor.

And now we return to Drowsy Peter once more. As Lucretia had surmised, Padilla had taken the mail route for Montgomery, and if the road had been in even moderately good condition, he might have reached Montgomery in time for the morning train which carried Lucretia and Bill forward on their journey; but as that celebrated road was in the most execrable condition—which is always the case after a rainy week—he did not reach Montgomery until four o'clock P.M., exactly twelve hours later than the mail schedule allowed to the mail contractors.

By the by, it is wonderful that this dreadful region of country has not yet been traversed by railroad. The distance from Stockton to Montgomery is about one hundred and ninety miles, and the great mail of the republic, from New Orleans to Bangor, and the entire Gulf and Atlantic coast between those two points, is conveyed by coaches over this road. Business passengers, too, are driven to take their chances through by mail. The river affords but little relief to the community, for nine months in the year there is not enough water in it to admit of steamboat travel; and when the river is full, the distance by water is so much greater than by land, that none but the sick and lazy traveller ever undertakes it.

The steamboat and cotton-planting interest of all those sections of country on and near the banks of the river have always given a cold shoulder to any railroad project between Montgomery and Mobile. And the reason is very obvious. A railroad from Montgomery down to Stockton would entirely destroy the river interest, except in the cotton-carrying season, which rarely lasts

longer than ninety days in a year. But when we consider that a railroad would shorten the mail time between those two points from thirty-six to eight hours, and that the entire travel would pass over the road, thereby yielding a rich percentage on the capital invested, it is indeed a matter of surprise that some of our capitalists have not yet turned their serious attention to the enterprise.

But we are travelling with Padilla now, and must not lose sight of him. He reached Montgomery, as we said, at four o'clock P.M., just eight hours after Lucretia and Mr. Jones had left it by steam. On inquiring at the hotel (the same our heroine and Bill had stayed at) he found there was no regular conveyance to proceed forward until next morning at six, and being fatigued by his forty-six hours' coach ride over the Stockton road, he concluded to rest himself quietly until that time.

He was shown to the very parlor occupied by our heroine. He ordered a slight supper, and some warm drink to be brought to him at once. Then walking to the mirror that hung over the fire-place, his extraordinarily drowsy appearance vanished as his eyes fell upon a slip of paper sticking between the frame and the glass, and on which was written the following words: "M. Belleville, New Orleans."

Had the devil himself shown his face in the mirror at that instant, the apparition would not have had such a powerful effect upon Padilla, as did that slip of paper with its three words. He stood gazing at it in speechless amazement. He knew the writing—he knew Lucretia had been in that room. Suddenly he sprang to the bell-rope and pulled as if he intended to tear the house down. In an instant Nancy entered, close followed by the waiter bringing his warm wine and sugar.

"Good gracious! what's the matter?" said Nancy, who was struck by the great alteration in the appearance of Padilla; for his emotion gave almost as lively an expression to his face, as a

hungry panther would exhibit having a lamb within reach of his claws.

"Who wrote on that paper, and who placed it there?" said Padilla, pointing to the mirror. And as he addressed himself to Nancy, she said:

"*I* placed it there, but I am not *sure* who wrote it; yet I think I could guess."

"Well, then, guess!" said Padilla, displaying his white teeth, clenching his fist and advancing a step toward Nancy, who, becoming terrified, screamed and fled from the room. The waiter would probably have followed her example had not Padilla occupied a position between him and the door. Turning suddenly, he said to the waiter:

"Who occupied this room last?"

"A lady, sir," was the reply.

"What kind of lady—young or old—handsome or ugly—tall or short?"

"She was young, sir, and tall and handsome, sir."

"Was she alone?"

"No, sir; she had a servant with her, and she called him William."

"What kind of man was he?"

"A large man, not more than twenty-six years old, with large blue eyes."

"When did they leave?"

"By this morning's train for Atlanta."

"Damnation!" said Padilla, with such emphasis that the waiter let the glass and tray fall from his hands, himself falling over a chair that stood behind him; and by the time he recovered, Padilla and his valise had disappeared.

On gaining the street, Padilla threw himself in a carriage standing there, and ordered the astonished driver to take him to the stage office as quickly as his horses could carry him. Away

they went, and in five minutes Padilla stood in the office. Without making any inquiries, he ordered a conveyance for Atlanta with the least possible delay. The agent demanded for how many passengers. Padilla answered :

" For myself, with a driver."

" Why, sir," said the agent, " it will cost" ——

" I care not what the cost will be, so that I start at once."

" Oh, very well, sir," said the obliging agent, and in ten minutes a nine-passenger coach and four made their appearance at the office door.

" Now, sir, if you please, your name, that I may enter it on the way bill."

That preliminary being arranged, the agent said :

" And now, sir, the fare if you please."

" How much ?" said Padillia.

" Why, sir, the passage is only two dollars and a half ; but as this is an extra, and we are compelled to send a full equipment, you will have to settle for the whole coach—that is just twenty-two dollars and a half."

Without a word in reply, Padilla handed over the money, sprang into the coach and the next instant was flying toward Atlanta at a good rate of speed.

And now he began to ruminate on the discovery he had just made. It was plain that Bill Rankin was in Lucretia's service, and also that she had outwitted him in leaving the city of New Orleans without his knowledge. He could not be mistaken. He compared the time of Bill's flight with Captain Bang, with the soirée he had seen Lucretia visit in company with the Bellevilles, and saw at a glance that Lucretia had not returned with the family as he had supposed, that her departure from the city had been effected from the house where the soirée was given, and not from Belleville's. And then he remembered he had not inquired at the hotel by what name Lucretia was travelling. This neglect

on his part set him nearly frantic. He called to the driver to stop, and inquired how far they had proceeded on the way, and was told, about seven miles. He then resolved to return, but the driver told him it was impossible—his orders were most strict. Padilla offered him a bribe to no purpose, for the driver, to put an end to the colloquy, let his whip fall with a terrific crack between the heads of his leaders, who burst forward at a gallop which the driver did not think proper to restrain for some minutes.

Finding all ideas of returning to Montgomery must be abandoned, Padilla gave himself up to the dark spirit of hatred and revenge that swayed his bosom; and scheme on scheme were hatched and abandoned until, perfectly exhausted by fatigue and abstinance, he settled into a deep but unrefreshing sleep. Nor did the stopping of the coach at the relay stations and the noise and bustle of changing horses, awaken him; he slept soundly until a little after midnight, when the coach pulled up at the inn door.

"Atlanta, sir!" shouted the driver and the innkeeper, who held a lantern in his hand, as they pulled open the coach door, and discovered Padilla sound asleep.

"Atlanta, sir!" they shouted again, and Padilla sprang forward and said, being only half awake:

"Augusta! Augusta!—I must catch the morning train from Augusta to Charleston."

"Well, it's my opinion," said the driver, "you had better get out of the coach and look about you before you talk of Augusta."

By this time Padilla was fully awake, and on looking at his watch by the light of the innkeeper's lantern, saw it was past midnight. Then turning to the driver, he said:

"Where is the stage office?"

"Why, sir, you don't think of riding any more to-night, I hope.'

"What's that to you, sir?" said Padilla.

"Oh, nothing, sir, only my articles don't compel *me* to start out after midnight, and I dont think there's a spare driver in this town who *can* be made to start till six in the morning."

"Besides, sir," interposed the landlord, "you must need some rest, for the driver tells me you have ridden straight through from Stockton. I have excellent accommodations, sir."

"Doubtless," said Padilla; "but before I test them I demand to be driven to the stage office. You, sir," addressing the driver, "have to proceed there to report your arrival; I will accompany you."

As he finished speaking he was about to reënter the coach, when he was told the office was only around the corner, and he concluded to walk there. When the agent had been awakened and informed of Padilla's wishes, he declared it was impossible to start a coach before the regular hour in the morning, because he had neither horse, coach nor driver but those imperatively demanded for his mails in the morning.

Thus was Padilla constrained to rest himself at the inn till daylight. The reader must remember the little slip of paper found by Padilla in the parlor at Montgomery. Well, that same little piece of paper had given almost as much uneasiness to our heroine as it had to Padilla. When Lucretia had folded her letter to the Bellevilles, she had dropped her pen on the floor, and on picking it up she had tried the point upon another sheet of paper by writing the name of her benefactor; she tore off the name and intended to throw it in the fire, but had forgotten to do so, and thought no more of the matter until the cars had left Montgomery, and then it was too late to repair her neglect.

A consultation was held by her and her worthy steward, when it was at once resolved that both herself and steward should once more approach the baptismal fount of Mother Necessity; whereupon *Madame Vale* became *Hannah Winter*, and *William Jones* suddenly found himself to be the veritable *John Smith*. In these

names they had been registered at the inn where Padilla was now stopping, and as the weather was cold and getting colder as they progressed northward, Lucretia was fully justified in muffling up her person and face in a manner to defy the curiosity of those she met. Bill also had become suddenly adorned with a wig and whiskers of the brightest sorrel.

Maintaining their disguises, they arrived in Augusta about three hours before Padilla reached Atlanta; and while he was tossing about under the influence of a heavy, unrefreshing sleep, she was slumbering as tranquilly as a child in its mother's arms, and John Smith was catching cat-naps with all his clothes on in a big rocking-chair in his room.

At six o'clock next morning, Lucretia and Bill started with the cars for Charleston, and the stage coach that carried Padilla, left Atlanta at the same moment. At noon that day, Lucretia arrived at a stopping-place called Branchville, a little more than half way from Augusta, Georgia, to Charleston, South Carolina; and at the same time, Padilla, who had reached Augusta in safety —had persuaded the railroad agent to permit him to take a passage on a freight train to start down to Charleston immediately after the arrival of the up train, which would probably be in by four o'clock in the afternoon. This arrangement might have produced some unpleasant results if the good judgment of Lucretia had deserted her for a minute. She avoided a catastrophe thus: Branchville is the point fixed on for the down and up trains between Augusta and Charleston, to pass each other; and from this point also a railroad branches off at a right angle, extending to Columbia, South Carolina, from which point there was a good natural road to Raleigh, North Carolina, and thence, railroad again through Gaston, on to Weldon, in North Carolina, from which point the great Atlantic Coast railroad extended through Petersburg, Richmond, and Fredericksburg, to the opening of Aquia Creek, on the Potomac River, whence the travel was by

steamboat up to Washington, and thence by railroad again through Baltimore, Philadelphia, and a portion of New Jersey until you reached Jersey City, opposite to New York.

Now it will be seen that the mail was carried directly down to Charleston over the main road, and thence by steamboat, by sea, to Wilmington, North Carolina, situated on Cape Fear River, a few miles from the ocean; and from Wilmington to Weldon, the very point Lucretia was compelled to touch on her route down toward the Atlantic from Columbia. Now, on her arrival at Branchville, and learning all about the Columbia route—how it avoided the sea trip from Charleston to Wilmington—and how it occupied one day more time in travelling, she resolved to quit the Charleston and Augusta line—although their seats were secured and passages paid through—and go to Columbia in the hope of breaking every trace of her movements, should Padilla really be in hot pursuit—a fact she never doubted since her steward's last revelation.

Her resolution once taken, Bill was summoned to carry it into effect. He was instructed to get the baggage out as quietly as possible and convey it to the Columbia cars, which were to start within five minutes after the other two trains should pass each other. Bill was a charming servant, and completely humbugged the baggage-master about his mistress being sick—promising that if the lady was not ready, she would remain there till the next day's train. But he must have the baggage; and he got it.

After a slight refreshment at Branchville—the cars having arrived up—Lucretia found herself moving on to Columbia at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, and at which place she arrived safely about five o'clock P.M. Here she resolved to rest until next day, to prepare herself for a thirty-hour stage ride to Raleigh. Poor girl! she needed rest. Her nerves had been stretched to their utmost tension for the last four or five days, and the effort was becoming visible in her face. Bill saw it, and his rough,

honest heart melted with genuine pity for the suffering he saw and could not alleviate.

The next morning, Lucretia was looking much better, and Bill thought more cheerful and happy; and when he walked to the coach door, hat in hand, and handed her a little basket covered with a fresh, clean white napkin, and when she uncovered the basket, and saw four or five delicious sandwiches, two or three fine large oranges, a small bottle of exquisite sherry, and a neat hunting-cup to drink from, she broke forth in one of her merriest laughs, while Bill, whose face became crimson to the roots of his hair, said:

"I hope, mam, you'll keep them by you, for I can't bear to see you so beatin out by these long rides, and nothin to liven you up a little. Them things is all fust rate, and, I beg your pardon, but if you'll please to take my word for it, they'll do you a power of good along the road."

As soon as she ceased laughing, Lucretia said in her kindest manner:

"Well, my worthy steward, I should be very grateful for your attention, and I am so; but tell me where you bought these things, and when."

"Why, you see, mam, I bot the cup in Orleans, but," he added quickly, "I never drunk out of it once; it's bran noo. The basket, napkin and plate, I got here; and the wittles and the wine I got from the boss at the hotel."

"Well, then, I'll keep them for use if I should require anything on the way. But have you taken care of yourself as well as of me? You must remember I cannot afford to let you get sick."

"Me sick! why, I never get sick, mam. And as for takin care of myself, jist look at these!" And as he spoke, he drew from his overcoat pocket a bundle of meat and bread neatly wrapped up, and a pint travelling flask. "I guess there aint much danger of me with sitch seconds as them."

Lucretia nodded her head in approval, Bill mounted the box (it was a small two-horse conveyance), and away they started for Raleigh.

It was seven o'clock when the coach started, and just at that moment, Padilla, who had reached Charleston on the freight train by daylight that same morning, might have been seen walking from the harbor, where he had been unsuccessful in his attempt to sail to Wilmington until four in the afternoon. At Charleston, he lost all traces of Lucretia, for the reasons that the reader is already acquainted with; and he was not long in concluding that she had gone on by the way of Columbia. He knew the route very well, and that if he should leave Charleston by sea twelve hours after she left Columbia by coach, he would just beat her twelve hours to Weldon, the point through which both their routes lay. He accordingly smoothed his haggard features as best he could, and after a light breakfast, he retired to his room and slept soundly until two o'clock in the afternoon. He then arose greatly refreshed, and after taking a strong dinner, proceeded at once to the steam-bathing tub known as the "Governor Dudly," a wretched steamboat in which the passengers and mails were constantly perilled by a gang of speculators, every one of whom should have been hung up by the heels, to the tallest pine-tree in the Carolinas, for their criminal disregard of human life—not that we consider Padilla as being human—by retaining such a boat from Charleston harbor around Cape Fear on the wild Atlantic Ocean. But the devil is always good to his own. The stockholders escaped an indictment for murder, and Padilla was landed safely in Wilmington next morning in time for the train to Weldon.

At this point of the chase, fortune decided in favor of Lucretia. The train from Wilmington to Weldon ran off the track at about midway between the two places, and so much damage was done to the cars and the road, that Padilla lost an entire day and night, thereby allowing full time to Lucretia to pass through

Weldon and so on to New York without any interruption whatever, finishing her journey in nine days from New Orleans, which was rapid travelling when we consider that she took the river route to Montgomery, and the Columbia and Raleigh stage route through the Carolinas.

Being at her destination, she remained seated in the railroad office at Jersey City, while Bill was immediately dispatched with a letter to M. Louis Bremont, a French merchant in New York and the most particular friend of M. Belleville. In two hours time Bill reappeared, accompanied by M. Bremont, whom we thus briefly describe:

Louis Bremont was about sixty years of age, one of the ancien regime of France, who, for his fidelity to the house of Bourbon in 1830, had been forced to fly from his native land. Being a wealthy man, he had located himself in New York, where, his active spirit not permitting him to lead an idle life, he entered largely into commercial business, and at the time of his introduction to the reader, was one of the largest importers of French and India dry goods in the metropolis of the new world.

He was tall, spare, and firm in his carriage, dignified in his manners; hair originally black, but now well showered with the snow of age; black eyes, pure Gallic features, wearing continually a grave, firm, yet benevolent expression. His wife was still living, and like M. Belleville, he had two daughters and no son. His residence was on Fourth street, opposite the Washington Parade Square.

After a most cordial welcome, he proposed to conduct Lucretia to his own home, as being the surest method of strictly concealing herself and her operations for the recovery of the stolen property. Bill was to accompany them to the house of M. Bremont with the intention of making him at once acquainted with its location, its porter and its coachman, for the purpose of ready communication with his mistress, M. Bremont deeming it necessary that all the

other servants about the establishment should remain in ignorance of Bill's employment. To perfect this arrangement, the porter was instructed to admit William Jones to Madame Vale or M. Bremont at any hour of the day or night, while the coachman was to be obedient to any of his demands in that line.

Bill was then dismissed to procure private lodgings for himself as near as possible to Bremont's dwelling, and to give immediate and full intelligence of his location as soon as it should be effected.

To finish this chapter of travelling, it is only necessary to state that Padilla arrived in New York on the day following Lucretia's arrival; and as we shall have occasion to visit his lodgings and introduce his landlady to the reader presently, we dismiss him now without any further notice.

CHAPTER X.

GEORGE SNAPP, ESQ.

BEFORE nightfall, on the day of his arrival in New York, Bill had located himself in McDougal street, within three squares of M. Bremont's mansion, and had conveyed to his mistress the full particulars of his transaction. He was then dismissed with instructions to proceed at once to search out, in the most quiet manner possible, the abode of the runaway slave Alice, of whose whereabouts in Orange street, Padilla had information.

Immediately after dark, Mr. Rankin, alias William Jones, alias John Smith, decorated with his red whiskers and wig, made his first appearance in the bar-room of Tommy Thompson's old stand, on the corner of Chatham and Orange streets, for many months. In throwing his eyes about him, he at once recognized several of his old acquaintances of the Ring and Belt profession, one of whom in particular, a George Snapp, had been his second in the last *mill* he had figured through as victor.

This George Snapp—or *George Nippers*, or *Snappy*, as he was called by his friends and familiars—had always been a great admirer of Mr. Rankin, and a true friend to boot; therefore Bill expected to see Snappy jump from his chair and take him by the hand the moment their eyes met. But Snappy returned Bill's gaze with a steady stare, without any symptoms of a recognition. This cold indifference on the part of his old friend was a severe blow to Bill, who, in his joy at lighting on the very man

whose aid he required, and for whom he was in search, had quite driven from his mind all thought about the big red whiskers and hair, that conjointly covered four-fifths of his face. Determined, however, to have an understanding on the spot, he strode up to within a foot of the chair on which Snappy was seated, and placing his arms akimbo, looked down upon the latter gentleman and said, in a hoarse whisper:

"Don't you know me?"

Mr. Snapp being thus interrogated, placed his thumbs in the armholes of his red plush vest, balanced his chair on its two hindermost legs, quietly surveyed his interrogator from the toe of his shoe to the cone of his otter cap, in silence; then slowly disengaging his right thumb from his vest, and with the same thumb and the finger next to it, pulling down his glossy low crowned, broad brimmed, black hat, until it rested or seemed to rest upon his undoubted pug nose, said, with that peculiar sweetness of expression and harmony of voice, so characteristic of this class of New York sovereigns:

"Nairy time, daddy; and I don't think you know me neether."

"Oh! you don't, though; well, jist step outside the door, and I think I can make you remember me."

"Say," said Snappy, "did you cum in heer to find a fight? 'Cause if you did, you couldn't 'a dropped in a warmer spot."

"I didn't cum heer for a muss, nor for a hard word neether," said Bill, with admirable coolness, "but I cum for to find a friend, that is, a feller that used to be proud to call me his friend, and I *thought* I found him; but when you talk of fightin instead of *drinkin*, why, I find I made a mistake in your *heart*, no matter how well I know'd your face, that's all."

As Bill finished speaking, he moved to the counter and called for a hot brandy toddy with a piece of lemon peel in it. Then pulling a sovereign from his vest pocket, he placed it on the

counter with a slap of his hand, that set the glasses jingling and the decanters waltzing, saying:

"I wouldn't give a spiled fig for an old croney that would haul off his friendship without tellin his reason why."

"Look at here, sonny," said Mr. Snapp, rising from his seat. "If you *do* know me *sure*, why don't you call me by name. If I ever did know you, it must be a wery long time ago, for no man could raise sitch a pair of whiskers in less than ten years, any how."

This remark of Mr. Snapp's brought Bill to his senses. He just then remembered that he had forgotton his disguise, which was so perfect that his old intimate had not discovered him. Then walking up to his friend, he extended his hand, and said:

"Snappy, old feller, I beg your pardon, I forgot I was a little altered within the last few days; but take my hand and let me whisper one word in your ear, and if you don't say it's all right, why I'm a nigger, that's all."

Mr. Snapp did take his hand, and Bill did whisper two words in his ear; whereupon Mr. Snapp gave a leap in the air, and sent forth a yell of satisfaction that would have done honor to Black Hawk, in his prime.

"Mum's the word," said Bill, "till I tell you to blow. Now come up all hands, and take a smile at my expense, and hopin it won't be the last one neether."

Seeing that Whiskers and Snapp were old friends, the boys all approached the counter, and there was a great shaking of hands and an expenditure of characteristic expletives on the happy turn affairs had taken. Then they drank to the good health of *Whiskers*, hoping he might soon scare up an old friend at every turn he made. Then Snappy excused himself to his companions, saying he wished to have a little private chat with Whiskers, and ended by saying:

"I'll see you all agin, boys."

And the boys seemed to have the fullest faith in what the gentleman said, for they all vociferated:

"All right, Snappy, all right."

Bill and Snappy were soon in the very centre of that ornamental district of New York familiarly known as the Five Points, which, for the benefit of the southern reader, I will attempt to describe as it was at the date of our history.

These five points are formed by the converging of Anthony street, upon Cross street a few yards north of the point where Orange street intersects Cross street at almost a right angle.

Orange street, running east and west, ends or begins in Chatham street; thus, Chatham street, which was and is the second thoroughfare of the Empire City, is only one hundred yards distant from this region of squalid misery, prostitution and crime, to the eastward. Broadway, the first thoroughfare of New York, lies three hundred yards distant to the ungodly centre; while the Bowery, undoubtedly the third thoroughfare of the city, is reached by the way of Bayard street to the northeast, after a distance of six hundred yards.

Each of the five points was occupied by groggery groceries, and all the other shanties, or rather rotten rookeries on both sides of all the streets, were used as rum-shops, oyster-shops, cigar and tobacco-shops, and dance-houses on the ground floors and in the cellars; while the upper portions were the abiding places of at least eight thousand wretched beings, male and female, of every shade and complexion between the pure Caucasian and the full blooded, flat nosed, kidney footed African negro.

On Anthony street, nearly opposite Centre street—which, at the time our history begins, commenced in Anthony—stood the old brewery, extending eastward through to Cross street.

This famous building was rented by the owner—who was a substantial elder of one of the most fashionable churches of the city—to a speculator, who had converted the decayed, slimy,

filthy building, into a vast number of pens, which he in his turn rented out to beggars, rag-pickers, pilferers, pickpockets, robbers, highwaymen, and murderers. Occasionally some of these, more wealthy than their associates, would hire several pens, and make a good income by keeping a boarding and lodging establishment. Of course, if funds were low when rent was due, any little trifle that had been found astray would be acceptable to the sub-proprietor. Issuing from this human hive of misery and vice, troops of children of both sexes, from six to fourteen years of age (beyond that age, the boys were men and the girls completely depraved and demoralized; for in this sanctuary of depravity, the youngest public prostitute in the world could be found), could be seen every morning and evening with all the paraphernalia of their several callings—dressed in rags, incased in dirt, and completely dead to every sense of right or wrong.

The morning troop—the younger—would gather rags and paper, and steal by day, while the evening gang—the oldest and most expert—were dispatched about the theatres and other places of public amusement, where all their genius as chance messengers, beggars and pickpockets were called into action—their efforts yielding a rich harvest to the enterprising genius of the corps.

All the arts practised in London at White Friars, the Mint, Saffron Hill, and St. Giles in the days of their greatest prosperity, were combined and in successful operation at the Five Points. It was indeed a sanctuary, for its unhallowed precincts were avoided as you would the plague, by every one except some members of the police, those few who might have good intentions, the many who had evil purposes to serve, and those lost ones, who—driven by destitution or crime, or both—settled within the pernicious atmosphere, to return no more.

There were junk shops, where old rags, rope, bottles, scraps of iron, brass, copper and lead, were purchased and concealed until a *shipment* could be made—old clothes shops, where every vari-

ety of male and female apparel was bought, sold, exchanged and pawned. In this line of business, the astute children of Israel excelled. "Does ye vant to py? I shell im to you so sheeper as any pody on de Pints"—would break upon the ear of any one who happened to glance at one of these bazars in passing; and if he were at all inexperienced, and unfortunate enough to pause and examine the goods, he was the luckiest man in the world if he escaped with the loss only of his pocket-handkerchief or hat, or both.

The system of hat stealing in vogue at the Points is worthy of notice. Should the subject be an unhappy stranger—a stray fish in this vast net—and his hat worth from fifty cents to five dollars (a cheaper article not being considered worth the trouble), some (apparently) half drunken villain would stagger against the victim with such force that not unfrequently the hat would fly one way and its wearer another. Immediately, some three or four others would come to his assistance, deploring his mishap, and placing him upon his feet in such a skillful manner that any other article of value not actually fastened to his flesh—as a finger or earring—was certain to disappear before he recovered breath enough to feel that he had suddenly become a subject for the sublime art of conveyancing; but thanking the surrounding professors (who immediately disappear as if by magic), his first thought is to recover his hat, which, by the by, is nowhere to be seen—and for the following reason.

The cady had no sooner touched the ground, than a little ragged, dirty girl, with one garment on, bare legs, bare head, and hair streaming in the wind, and not more than seven years old, seized the waif; and at the very moment the victim is inquiring of a Jew merchant as to whether *he* saw anybody take *that* hat, the little thief is snugly seated in the Jew's reception or purchasing room, waiting for the stranger to depart, that she may turn her trick to some account. In answer to his question,

the descendant of Aaron tells him he saw a *nigger* running up Cross street hill with a hat, just after the gentleman fell down; and away starts the gentleman up Cross street hill through Mulberry street into Chatham square; then pausing for more breath, the idea first suggests itself to him that he might as well bury himself to the eyes in a haystack to search for a cambric needle as to search for *that* nigger with *that* hat, in Chatham square. The scene then closes with the discovery that his watch, wallet, penknife, and pencil-case, have all disappeared, while he was under the influence of his late disastrous collision, and he goes on his way a sorrowful but a wiser man than he was at the close of his morning prayer.

When Mr. Rankin, alias Whiskers, and Mr. George Snapp, or Snappy, left the bar-room, and proceeded to the Points, it was for the purpose of sounding Old Florence, a Jew pawnbroker of that locality, touching the whereabouts of the slave Alice, in search of whom they were. Bill had trusted no important branch of his mission to Snappy, telling him the money value of things was nothing, but as relics they were dearly prized; that as the dressing-case was a handsome thing, and as Alice (so Padilla's information ran) had located herself in Orange, somewhere near Cross street, she had probably had occasion to pawn it with my Uncle Florence, who was as ripe a knave as ever escaped the gallows.

Snappy was well acquainted with Uncle Florence, having transacted many a neat piece of legitimate business with him, in the way of pledging jewelry and other articles of value for various genteel gamblers and the higher order of courtesans, with whom he had the honor of being acquainted. Mr. Rankin having become quite a new man in his morals since the date of service in Lucretia's employ, began to feel that he must sooner or later cut the acquaintance of all his old associates. If he should ever be heard to raise his voice against prize-fighting and other blackguard sports and pastimes amongst them, he would be ridi-

culed out of his humor, and that would never do. He resolved to say nothing that might give offence, but to wait patiently for a favorable result of his undertaking, to which end he had pressed Snappy into his service, well knowing he would prove a powerful coadjutor in the affair. And as Snappy had always acted as Bill's second in the ring, he wisely determined not to change positions with him now.

To Uncle Florence they went, and after a formal introduction, the examination commenced. Snappy assured Florence it was all right, that although the dressing-case was stolen, his friend with whiskers—Mr. Jones—was prepared to pay handsomely for its restoration; whereupon Bill drew forth a purse of gold coin and jingling it before the enraptured eyes of the Jew, said:

"If you help me to git back that box, I'll give you twenty gold sovereigns."

"Father Abraham!" exclaimed my uncle, "how I should mish dat box I don't know," and he clasped his hands violently; his chin sank upon his breast, and with a look of perfect despair his eyes were fixed upon the flinty floor of his shop.

It was quite plain the box was not in the possession of the Jew; for his unfeigned dejection at missing such a reward, was equal to what might be expected in a guilty wretch who had just been condemned to the gallows.

"But vare, vare did you shay de black shwindler lived? tell me more about it. I think she shall be found out. Vill, vill you give the shovereigns if I *find* dish bad voomans?"

"Yes," said Bill, "that is, if finding the slave will lead to the getting of the property stolen?"

"Holy Moshes!" said the Jew, half crying, "supposhe she have shold 'em out of town! De cush of Abraham fall on her voolly head if I don't git the revord."

And the worthy man seized the thin grey hair that still honored

his crown, with both hands, rocking violently to and fro in an agony of avarice painful even to behold.

After explaining to the Jew as near as possible the supposed abiding-place of the slave Alice, and describing her to Florence, as Padilla had done to him, the Jew resolved to sally forth with Bill and Snappy at once, to beat up her quarters, if possible. Here Bill thought it advisable to throw in a word about Padilla, who, he was thoroughly persuaded, would be in New York in a few days, and warned Florence, after giving him a sovereign for his readiness to take a hand in the game, that if such a man as he described Padilla to be, should happen to call there on a similar errand, to be profoundly ignorant of the entire business.

At this warning, the Jew's eyes, which had been devouring the sovereign, were suddenly and cunningly fixed upon Mr. Jones's organs of vision; and after a moment's gaze, which made no noise, yet spoke a volume, he said slowly:

"Oh, ho! I shee—I shee. Darc ish two partish vot vont de box—I shee;" and he moved his head slowly up and down, like one of those plaster images of a Chinese mandarin, that are peddled through the streets by the degenerate descendants of Cæsar and Pompey.

Bill being perfectly green in that branch of human science vulgarly denominated villainy, gave Florence credit for being a right sharp instrument to work with, and one on whose honesty and diligence he could rely. Not so with Snappy. He had noticed Uncle Florence's sinister expression, and at once drew the most unfavorable conclusion from it. He said nothing then, but he was fully resolved to put Bill on his guard. Although Snappy was, in the fullest sense of the word, a regular New York "b'hoy," his attachment for Madame Vale's steward was strong and honest; and he inwardly resolved that if he should detect his Uncle Florence in any double dealing to the prejudice of Bill

or his cause, he would bring a gang of rowdies on the Points, and beat the Jew's brains out with the gilt balls hanging over the door of his den.

Florence having prepared himself with overcoat, cap, and cane, closed his shop, and giving some private instructions to an old, frightful-looking woman who acted as his housekeeper, and whose name was "Hagar," started in company with Bill and Snappy to find Alice. Their steps were directed to the place designated by Padilla's informant, but no trace of Alice or any such person could be obtained. The three then held a short consultation, when, at the suggestion of the Jew, it was resolved to visit the Rev. Mr. Cheathim, who was known to be president of a philanthropic society in New York, founded for the benevolent purpose of stealing all the slave property they could lay their hands on, then casting the unfortunate negro upon the charity of the great metropolis, to die of starvation, or to pass the remainder of his life in a state prison, for stealing, solely to save himself from the first-mentioned catastrophe.

It was arranged that Uncle Florence should be the spokesman, and the following was the lie coined to deceive the reverend president. Alice, a negress slave, the property of one Padilla, in New Orleans, escaped from her master some years since, and resided as is supposed somewhere in Orange, near Cross street, but whose whereabouts is now unknown. Padilla having recently returned to New Orleans, and finding Alice gone, was on his way now, to New York, with a requisition from the governor of Louisiana, to carry Alice back into bondage on the pretence that she was a fugitive from justice, she having robbed her master of valuables to a large amount, at the time of her escape. In proof of this, here was Mr. William Jones, just from New Orleans, a man who knew Padilla well, and was fully cognizant of his intentions; and the object of his visit was simply to give such information to the society of which his reverence was the president, as would

effectually baffle the master in his villainous intentions, and nothing more.

This being settled, the trio proceed to Waverley Place, a fashionable part of the city, where the reverend Cheathim resided. The pastor was home, and Uncle Florence sent up his *business* card, by way of introduction—murmured a short prayer to Abraham, that he might be forgiven for entering a tabernacle of the Nazarene—imploring his ancient ascendant to remember how many golden shekels he was taking from the Philistines by the indignity he was putting on the religion of his fathers in entering the dwelling of a Christian dog. His prayer being finished, a servant presented himself and invited the Jew and his companions to walk into the reception room.

The apartment was small—the entire furniture was probably worth forty dollars, and the *tout ensemble*, gave you the idea of poverty struggling for comfort. The meanness of the room contrasted so strongly with the exterior magnificence of the house, that all three visitors noticed it The Jew said: "Vell; dees shentiles go all for show on de outshide—nothin inshide—nothin, nothin!"

"Why?" said Bill, "if his serciety goes in fur bringin slave niggers from Noo Orleens here, my opinion is, it must cost 'em so much money they are compelled to live poor to pay the expense."

"Oh, Bags!" said Snappy; "why Bill, you nor Uncle Florence, here, don't know nothin about it; why, man, these fellers don't pay nothin for what they call the mancipation of these niggers. Why, *they* make bushels by it. It's a regler bisiness with them, *it* is."

"Where does the money cum from," said Bill, "to pay all the passages here and to support the niggers after they git here? —that's what I would like to know!"

"Oh! you would, would you; then listen to me a little, before the parson gits downstairs. You see, Bill, these suscieties

is split up into committees for different dooties. Well, the committee of the 'whole' is on collection dooty always; and they go about with pititions and pamphlets to all the members of their purswashion and collect in the dough to meet the expenses. Well, you see, the officers are werry respectable people, the ministers at the head—and the lay members and all the other fools that can be found soft enough to believe, that it is better to be free and starve, than it is to be a slave and have plenty, for only a common day's work, fork over the stuff and take a receipt in the shape of a blessing. Well, noo agents are sent out South with funds and letters of credit, and a brisk trade is opened in helpin the niggers to escape. When they git here, they expect to be supported without doin nothin, and they *do* live a while on the susciety; but when the excitement is over, they catch the cold shoulder, and from that time out, it's *root hog or die.* But what puzzles me is, how do these fellers keep clear from being catched at their tricks?"

"Oh!" said Bill, "I know all about that part of the business. While I lived in Noo Orleens, I worked for a feller who has bin a real slave-catcher in Affricay, and he told me that these agents for the abolitionists is smart men, and that they make false passes for the niggers, and that they even go so far as to take them on steamboats as their own property, and when they get up as far as Ohio, they turn 'em loose with their passage paid to Canaday or Noo York."

"But ish it honisht to carry de black peoples avay from home in dat vay?" said the Jew, who although not overburdened with that *convenient scare-crow* spoken of by Richard of Gloster, nevertheless seemed to entertain some doubt of the legality of negro-stealing, although the societies organized for that purpose wear ecclesiastical heads; and there is no doubt but that Uncle Florence would have proceeded to give his opinion in the premises had he not been warned to silence by the approaching footsteps

of the Reverend Mr. Cheathim, D.D., president and treasurer of the New York Humane Union of Friends for the enlightenment and amelioration of their benighted brothers at home and on the west coast of Africa.

The president entered the room, and bowed right reverendly to his visitors, who, in their turn, rose from their seats and bowed also.

"I presume I address Mr. Aminadab Florence?" said Cheathim, fixing his cold, cunning blue eyes on that gentleman, whose unmistakable features said, *old closhe*, as distinctly as the human voice and lips could speak the words. The Jew endured the stare with tolerable courage, for he was not aware of having any stolen property of Cheathim's in his possession.

"Yesh, your reverinsh, I am Mishter Florence, and dees ish two shentlemans who come vith me to give some information about the shlave vooman Alish vot vas stole from Noo Orleensh."

"I *have* known something about a poor old colored woman named Alice, who escaped from the brutal bondage in which she had been held since her birth, but of her location *now*, I am unable to give any information."

"Piddilly, who is her master," said Bill, "was informed she lived in Orange street, near the Five Pints."

"And how do *you* know he had any such information?" said Cheathim, turning his glittering eyes upon the hair and whiskers of the steward.

"He told me so," said Bill, "and wanted to git me to attend to catchin the girl or woman; and when I refused, he said he would go to Noo York himself and see what could be done."

"And what proof can you give me that you are not his agent at this moment, endeavoring to discover the poor colored creature to answer the base purposes of your employers?" said Cheathim.

"The best of proof!" said Bill. "I will place in your hands two hundred and fifty dollars cash, to pay her passage to Ingland or Affricay, if you will undertake to place in my hands—Bill shewed his hands—the dressing-box and child's playthings that she stole when she cut from Noo Orleens; and I won't ask to see the nigger onst."

"Oh," said Cheathim, "you want the dressing-case and contents? And what for, pray? Are they valuable?" And while he spoke, a slight blush invaded the deathlike hue of his face, and his eyes flashed once—only once—then all was marble and glitter again.

"Why, you see, mister president, I want the things to keep Piddilly from gittin 'em."

"Ah! *you* want them, that no one else may get them. Well, from your language I should judge that case and its contents to be of some value."

"Why, you see, sir, they aint worth nothin, only as keep-sakes for a lady whot loved the little baby that used to play with the toys and wear the little things."

"Where, and who is that lady?"

"A long, werry long ways away from here," said Bill, with a sigh, and a long face.

"But you can tell me *who* the lady is, I suppose," said Cheathim.

"No, I can't, for I never spoke to her in my life."

"How came it to pass that a lady, to whom you have never spoken, should employ you on this errand?" said Cheathim.

"Ah!" said Bill, with a sigh, and a look of piety that would have brought a blush to his honest face had his fiery whiskers and hair permitted it, "the lady is werry sick—dying perhaps—for the want of these werry things, and I was sent by her uncle, a man I work for when I am at home."

"What is her uncle's name?" said Joseph.

"Sir?" said Bill, who began to shake a little, for the first time.

"I ask you the name of the lady's uncle."

"To be sure, the uncle has got a name, but I don't care about tellin it until I can find out somethin about the business."

"Then, sir, our interview is ended, for I cannot deal with you, not knowing who you are; nor can I communicate with your employer, for the same reason. Both you and he may be impostors, and unless you tell me all the facts, and the names of the parties interested, I shall give no information in the premises whatever." And the reverend Cheathim, rising from his seat, bowed coldly, to intimate that the audience was over.

Bill, whose bosom had been swelling with hope a moment before, became alarmed at the turn affairs were taking. The Jew also showed evident signs of misery at the prospect of new obstacles between him and his promised reward, and not knowing that Bill's story about the lady's uncle was a fiction, thought it high time to interpose, and said:

"Vy, vy don't you tell the shentlemens de *onclesh* name? May pe he knowsh de onclesh, and den all vill pe right."

Bill, who at once took the accidental hint of the honest Hebrew, said:

"Certainly, I'll tell the gentleman's name—of course I will—nor I don't care who knows it neether, for he's one of 'em, sure as your born. His name is Mister Belleville, and he lives in Noo Orleans. And I can prove, by a French merchant in this city, named Mister Brumont, that I speak the truth."

The eyes of Cheathim once more flashed and the faintest tint of color rested on his cheek as he said:

"That alters the case. If you have any person of respectability in New York to vouch for you, I think I may be of service to your cause."

The Jew grinned, Bill smiled and bowed pleasantly, and

Snappy, who had not spoken at all, sat watching the countenances of all three. He knew the story about the lady's uncle was purely an invention of Rankin's, and he was pleased to see that it had been received as truth both by Cheathim and the Israelite, both of whom evidently saw a golden harvest in the affair; for Snappy had not lost any change of expression in either of their faces. Snappy was an invaluable friend to Bill, as the sequel will prove.

"And now, gentlemen, said Cheathim, "we can have nothing more to communicate to each other, except an appointment for to-morrow at six o'clock, here; at which interview (turning to Bill), I expect to meet Mr. Bremont, the gentleman you referred to."

"Oh, certainly!" said Bill, to the astonishment of Snappy, who believed M. Bremont to be as mythical a personageas M. Belleville. "I'll bring Mister Brumont, and he can bring a thousand more to prove what I say is truth—at six o'clock did you say, sir? I'll be on the spot as sure as shootin. And now ole fellar good bye. You've taken a load from my breast that forty hosses couldn't budge—your nigger serciety shant suffer neether for this *one* good act, now mind I tell you. Come Snappy! come Dabinabad (Bill never remembered hard names), let's go, for it's gittin late."

The divine bowed them to the front door and the trio departed. It was past ten o'clock when the reverend Joseph Cheathim reseated himself in his private study, which he had left to wait upon his departed visitors. Mr. Joseph Cheathim was about forty years of age—tall, dignified in manners and carriage, and could be so in language when the time required it. But as he was a villain of the deepest dye by practice and education, all styles of language and etiquette were subservient to his artful tongue.

His features were classical and handsome—his hair was light

brown, coarse and wiry—he wore no beard or whiskers, his eyes were deep clear blue, and wore constantly the glittering appearance of a glass eye in the head of a stuffed panther; they had melted twice during the late interview, but had immediately frozen again. (Snappy had carefully observed the thaw and the frost.) His complexion was dull and leaden like the face of a fresh corpse—the same tint pervading every feature. He dressed in black and wore a snowy cambric cravat, which gave even a more ghastly appearance to his face. Had a phrenologist examined his head, he would have reported time, order, alimentiveness, destruction, acquisitiveness and amativeness very large; and tune, color, hope, benevolence, ideality, veneration and philoprogenitiveness scarcely perceptible. If phrenology be a science, a brain so constructed is capable of more evil, even, than I am compelled to relate, as a true historian, in these pages; for be it remembered that Joseph Cheathim is no ideal person, but a real flesh and blood scoundrel, who in his day was personally known to thousands of the citizens of the Empire City, both before and after his damnable hypocrisy and villainy were discovered and made public—that is, as public as any infamy becomes, when the transgressor is found beneath the sacred robes of divinity. When his day of retribution *did* come, he was dismissed from his holy office, and broken from his places of trust and benevolence, simply on the charges of having misapplied certain sums of money, and making some erroneous statements in the books under his control; the plain English of the charges brought against him, being nothing less than robbery, forgery and seduction of every shade of blackness that the devil can paint. I ask pardon for this digression, but as the plot of this work will not permit its extension so far as to reach that period of Joseph Cheathim's (a fictitious name, of course) life, when his genius failed to save him from obloquy and shame, I thought it best to relate here the end of his public career. To resume our story. Joseph soliloquizes a little.

"So! that negro wench has deceived me, after all. Well I must say my *outré* pastimes are beginning to impair my judgment. (He smiled.) I laugh at the bare idea, and yet I cannot deny the fact that this miserable black beast has completely deceived me. Oh, no! she brought nothing from her master—not even as much as would buy a gingham frock—the lying wench. That box is valuable, and she knew it, and with the cunning of all her infernal black race, she has either concealed it, waiting for a rich reward, or has already sold it and secured the money. And then to think with what regularity she called for her monthly allowance until I placed her in old Fink's house as a nurse for his brats. (He started to his feet.) I must go to Fink's at once." At that moment the clock gave the first stroke of eleven. He cast his eye at the dial, then sunk back in his easy-chair. "Too late," he said, and resting his elbow on the table, and his head on the upturned hand, was at once lost in a deep reverie.

The room in which we now see him was much larger than the poor room downstairs where he entertained Aminadab Florence and his companions. It was richly furnished in every particular. The large windows, heavily curtained, opened on the street. He sat facing them. Behind him a door was partly open, revealing a chamber of the most luxurious magnificence, the walls of which were decorated with many rare specimens from the pencil of true art, representing Venus rising from the sea, the rapes of Semele and Leda, and other pictures equally well calculated to allay the blood and chasten the desires into perfect serenity.

On the left side of the room, as he was seated, a splendid French mirror—rising from within a few inches of the floor to the height of seven feet, and about four feet broad—was fastened to the wall without the aid of cords or clasps. Satin damask ottomans, sofas, and chairs, rested on the rich Wilton carpet

that covered the floor, and received each foot-fall as noiselessly as a snow-flake settles on the earth.

The wall above the mantel—which stood diagonally opposite the grand mirror, and consequently to his right, and about half way forward between the line he occupied and the front windows—was adorned with a *Madonna*, a genuine *Correggio*, on either side of which stood a pair of antique vases of the purest parian. A large, round marble table, inlaid with porphyry and jasper, stood in the centre of the room within ten feet of the mirror, and on that table the elbow of Joseph Cheathim's left arm rested as a support for his head. The position he had fallen into brought his back toward the mirror, while his eyes were fixed upon the Madonna.

The clock completed its eleven strokes slowly—the last reverberation had just floated beyond the ear, when a low, soft strain of harmony stole in upon the warm air of the chamber, as gentle and entrancing as if a choir of angels had breathed the melody. The spirit of Joseph received the offering with satisfaction, not because his soul was susceptible to its sweetness (his heart was ashes), but because that particular symphony awakened in his busy mind an image of loveliness that his unhallowed teachings had made the partner of his guilty pleasures. The music continued, Joseph smiled, and yet his position was unaltered, while his eyes seemed more intently fixed upon the angelic face of the Madonna. Function was suspended, and the immaterial spirit wandered on, through the realms of thought. He slept, waking. The richer and sweeter the melody became, the *vision*, on which his mind was resting, completer grew; till fascinating every impulse of his heart and mind, he lived only within the halo of its magic brightness.

And now all was still again. The smile (the offspring of his guilty thoughts) that had illumined his face, receded gently from

his handsome mouth, until it disappeared, leaving in its stead, an expression of anxiety, care, and even remorse.

And now the mirror moved from its resting-place, slowly advancing, as an opening door, from the wall, until the entire aperture it had so skillfully concealed was exposed to view.

And *there* stood a woman of surpassing beauty. She was *en robe de chambre*, with a royal wrapper of French white, fine merino, pointed with purple velvet and lined with pale azure silk, thrown carelessly about the shoulders, evidently to protect her from cold in passing from one room to another through some long passage. Her feet were cased in purple velvet slippers—her hair, which was black, hung in a profusion of curls to her shoulders, notwithstanding she had the good taste to adopt the Ionian style of wearing a white silk band around her forehead, interlacing with her jetty tresses until forming a large winged knot and pennons at the back of the head. Her eyes were black, almond-shaped, and adorned with long, silky lashes which gave a dreamy, languid expression to her face, while her bosom was reposing; but when forced into action, the latent principle of energy and passion, which swayed her then was terrible to behold. Joseph had seen the tempest rise once; he had only acted basely toward a stranger, and this woman's *active* principle had only reproached him for his meanness *to* that stranger.

But as we can closely calculate the strength of a tornado by multiplying the force of a severe gale, so Joseph had wisely concluded that an act of baseness done to the lady *herself*, would very naturally produce much more thunder and lightning than she displayed on behalf of the stranger.

There she stood, in the centre of the opening, regarding the passive Joseph with a look of fondness, that more resembled pride and pleasure, than purity and love. *She* spoke not—*he* heeded nothing but the Madonna. She thought he might be

sleeping; then some playful conceit flitted through her mi parting her rather coarse lips, displaying teeth of surpassi beauty, and provoking a single flash of her dreamy eyes. Th advancing noiselessly, she placed her transparent hands upon t table immediately behind him, and leaning gently forward ov his right shoulder, looked full into his glassy eyes.

With the shriek of a maniac he bounded from his seat, a stood regarding the apparition with a look almost of horro while drops of cold moisture gathered on his stony brow, and l shook in every limb.

The lady's eyes opened to their widest limit; the color forsoo her lips, which were suddenly compressed, and an expressi of the liveliest suspicion settled upon her features; but she d not tremble. They stood regarding each other in silence—h panting for breath to overcome his powerful emotion—she, obtain an explanation of his conduct as soon as he could fi words to express himself. Presently, the commotion in h nervous system subsided, and motioning the lady to be seated, l placed another chair near the table, and dropped into it, e hausted by the contest that had been raging within.

"Rachael!" said Joseph, in a low, harmonious tone. "Wl did you give me such a shock? Why did you not notify me o your approach?"

She did not answer immediately; there was a struggle in h bosom between her attachment for the man, and her suspicion o his fidelity to her. Her immense eyes were fixed upon his glitteri orbs, and every quiver of his features, and every tone of his voi while he spoke, were fixed upon her mind; and without the le shade of emotion, she said:

"Why *did* you start when I looked into your face? Have become less enchanting than when you first knelt to me in yo priestly robes, and solemnly swore my beauty had enslaved yo soul? Do not answer this moment, Joseph, for there is a fal

hood rising to your lips. I see it in your shrinking soul, through your chill, blue eyes. Why *did* you start, I say?"

"Rachael! does this imperiousness sit gracefully on her for whom I have sacrificed so much?"

"Ha! and is the hour we had designed for converse, to be spent in opposition and revolt? Imperiousness! For *whom you have sacrificed so much!* Where, the imperiousness! and what is the sacrifice you have made for me! Beware, Joseph, how you wound my self-love. *I* may grow jealous, and yet hate the cause of my distemper. *Your* sacrifices for *me!* Gracious Heaven, have I not violated those marriage vows which *you*—at the very altar of your church—pronounced binding and eternal? Was it not the sophistry of your tongue which led me to depart from the sacred duties of a faithful wife, impressed on me by *you*—a minister of Heaven—while performing the marriage rite? Was it not your double artifice—confessed to me—that gave me a half idiotic imbecile for a husband, and him a wife, whose mind, if not her body, was already polluted by the fascinating influence of your (I now fear) false love? Joseph! let us not meet beyond that hour when I *know* your protestations have been false from the beginning, or being honest *then*, have faded from your heart even as fragrance from a withered flower. Let us not meet then, Joseph, lest great evil come to both you and me."

Now, this short speech of the lady in French white and purple, had a most wonderful effect on Mr. Joseph Cheathim; and for the first time in his life he seemed to have become acquainted with this fact: there was at least one person in the world who could destroy him at a breath; for the lady had spoken nothing but the truth.

As soon as Joseph once learned to fear any one, he immediately resolved to remove the object from his path. He could not endure anything he feared, but he loved to play with those he hated. Those two passions, fear and hatred, although not at all

essential to the character of a divine, occupied a large place in the bosom of Mr. Cheathim, and now for the first time he feared Rachael Hawthorne. Acting upon his governing principle, her presence at once became unbearable, and he resolved to rid himself by degrees, yet at all hazards to rid himself of her association for the future. This was a dangerous resolution, yet absolutely necessary to his peace; and he determined to make his first advance without delay.

Fixing his dry, cold eyes upon Rachael when she finished speaking, he said, without any hesitation or embarrassment whatever:

"Rachael! we will not speak of the past. It cannot be recalled—would to God it could!" Here he rolled up his eyes piously toward Heaven. "To the future let our hearts and minds be directed, that by years of abstinence from folly and vice—beneath the unhallowed influence of which we so long have slumbered—we may woo back the peaceful blessing that left our hearts in that dark hour when passion, subduing reason, delivered us over to the enemy of man. Do not interrupt me, I implore you. Yes, Rachael, in this room I had seated myself to await your coming, with all the fondness I have ever shown for you; when, resting as you found me, yonder angelic face fascinated my eye, and I continued to gaze upon it until its lips seemed to move, whispering to my soul that terrible word '*Repentance! Awaken, Joseph, from the sleep of sin, or you are lost forever!*' The spirit of God's mercy had broken in upon my benighted heart, and I saw my guilt in all its huge deformity rise up like the spirit of darkness, to crush me with despair eternal!"

His head fell forward—his face was buried in his hands, and he wept hot, salt tears, displaying all the emotions of a man who *really believed* what he was saying. Rachael was partly deceived. The color came and fled again from her face—there was a slight *nervous* twitching discoverable about her lips—she breathed

quicky and audibly. After a violent effort to master the rising tumult in her bosom, she said, calmly:

"Joseph, we are in no mood for further conference to-night. To-morrow we will confer and learn each other. But, remember, Joseph, *that* meeting will unite as forever, or part us never more to be united. See, Joseph, the dial warns us to part. Our time is consumed, and, like spirits of darkness, we must sink down at the approach of morning."

Without another word, she entered the passage, and the mirror closed the aperture.

CHAPTER XI.

RACHAEL HAWTHORNE

On the following morning, about ten o'clock, Padill in New York, and to prevent any notice of his arrival, l baggage in a coffee-house near the Jersey City ferry, had secured furnished rooms in a retired vicinity of t metropolis.

This done, and having disguised himself in the full co a sailor, wearing false whiskers and moustache, he w for the double purpose of finding his slave Alice, and to all doubts, if possible, as to the arrival of Lucretia and in New York. From the moment he had left Montgo had lost all traces of his intended victims; but so deep impression made on his mind by the paper he had fou hotel, that it was impossible to banish the idea, that Luc written that paper, and was in New York then.

His steps were at once directed to Orange street. ' once occupied by Alice was vacant, and none of the r could tell where the *colored woman* had removed to. turned into Cross street, to reach Broadway by Antho On this track his course lay through the Five Points, an past the shop door of Aminadab Florence, the pawnbr this worthy citizen being something of the vulture in h was on the lookout for any game that might wander th brushing the dust from his goods hanging at the door, a

ing each passenger in the hope of trade. He spoke to some, urging them to *puy*, being governed in each case by the appearance of the person.

As Padilla approached, the eye of the Jew at once detected a man of trade, and stepping from his door to the sidewalk, with a bow such as only a Jew trader in second-hand clothes knows how to make, he addressed himself to Padilla, thus :

"Vount you vaulk in and look at the goodsh ?" Padilla paused, glanced at the Jew, then at the three gilt balls over the door, and the idea struck him, that being so near the old haunt of black Alice, the Jew might possibly give him some information on the subject of her present whereabouts. The Jew seeing his customer pause, renewed his invitation, which was accepted without any further parley, and Padilla walked into the shop.

"Vot vould you like to examine ?"

"Why, shipmate, I'll overhaul your cargo, and if I see anything I fancy, why perhaps we'll strike a bargain."

"Maype you vould like to see some fine jewelry—I have sitch nice preshents for de sailors' young vimin; vount you look at em ?"

"Why, what does such an old grampus as you are, know about young women ? However, I suppose you *do* know all about the women in these parts. I used to be acquainted about two years ago with an old darkey here, in Orange street, and she served me up with a partner whenever I came on shore. But she is gone now, and I've been beating about here for an hour and can't find hide nor hair of her."

"A plack vomin, did you shay ; vot vos her name ?"

"Alice ! was all the name I ever knew," said Padilla.

"Alice, did you shay ?"

"Yes, I said Alice."

"And did she come from Noo Orleensh ?"

"I believe so, from what I heard her say. But that's nothing to the point ; she's gone, and there's an end of her."

Aminadab's eyes twinkled, for he began to suspect something. The sailor he was addressing did not much resemble the Padilla Bill Rankin had described to him, but there was the smashed nose; and as Aminadab was all-powerful in the science of disguises himself, he was not much moved by the big whiskers and moustache of the sailor. With all the instinct that characterizes the descendants of Sarah, Hagar, and Abraham, Florence at once suspected the aforesaid sailor of being none other than the veritable Padilla, against whom he had been warned; and as he believed *in the fullness of his faith*, that any injury done to a Christian merited reward from the believers in the Messiah *yet to come*, he resolved to make both Rankin and Padilla pay good ransoms for finding Alice, and then to set her clear of both, on condition of dividing the spoil with him, and to this virtuous end he returned to the charge, saying:

"Now, vot vill you give to find out black Alice?"

This question came so bluntly upon the ear of Padilla that he started, and gazed so eagerly in the face of Aminadab, the suspicion of the Jew was confirmed as to his identity.

"I shay! vot vill de shentlemans give to find out Alice, the ole runaway shlave of Mishter Padilla in Noo Orleensh!"

"This last interrogatory of the Jew's, showed Padilla that he had his match in dissimulation, and also convinced him that Rankin and Lucretia were already on the track of the fugitive Alice, having the Jew in their pay. The business-like manner of Aminadab had set aside any further necessity for disguise; and Padilla, fixing his eyes full upon the Jew's sinister face, said:

"I will give five hundred dollars; provided the finding of Alice leads to the recovery, *by me*, of the dressing-case and its contents, stolen from"——

"You!" said the Jew, finishing the sentence, with a grin of satisfaction, and such a diabolical expression of triumph and cunning playing upon his features, that, without straining the imagi-

nation, his face was the embodiment of a German philosopher's idea of the devil, in a good humor with himself.

"Yesh!" continued Aminadab, "you ish Mishter Padilla; I know by de noshe," and he placed the first finger of his right hand on the falcon's beak with which his villainous face was adorned.

"No matter who I am," said the short-lived sailor; "if you have the power to place those things in my hand, do it, and you shall have the reward I spoke of."

"Yesh," said the cunning Israelite, scratching his head. "But vot vill the shentleman and de lady and her onclesh shay. I have promished to git de box and baby-closhe for her."

"For whom?" said Padilla, now on fire with curiosity, revenge and mortification.

"Vhy! for the lady vot vounts 'em, to pe sure."

"You have seen her, then—has she been here?" said Padilla.

"Oh, no! I have not sheen *her*, but her friend, Mishter Shones, I tinks Mr. Shnappy calls him, has bin here and give me a shovereign to begin with."

"Here!" said Padilla, casting five sovereigns on the counter before the Jew's eyes, "take that gold as an earnest of what you shall have if you serve me instead of those who came first."

"Ah!" said Aminadab, gathering up the gold in a pile, and then sinking it in a pocket of his garments so scientifically constructed as to emit no sound from the coin, "I likes to deal with a man of bishiness. Now, tell me vot I shall do to sherve you, and I vill do it py de peard of Jacob, if—if dare's no danger in it; you musht not vant me to preak de laws—not de law," and he shook his head deprecatingly.

"Listen to me," said Padilla, his eyes flashing with indignation at the Jew's impudence, "don't be prating about the law. You are a rascal, and you have received the first money to aid me in the recovery of property stolen from me, and"——

"Am I rashcal for dat?" said Florence, staring at Padilla.

"No, not for that, but for betraying those who first employed you, and you would betray me to them again if you dared, therefore you are a rascal. Now hear me and heed me well. If I find you betray my interest in any particular, I'll have you in the State prison, at least, and perhaps hung; for there is but little doubt of my being able to *buy* witnesses enough in this vicinity to prove you guilty of half a dozen murders, you scoundrel."

The worthy Aminadab became the color of ashes at this speech—his teeth chattered and his knees trembled beneath him; he grasped Padilla by the arm, and casting his huge, protruding eyes about the shop, said in a hoarse whisper:

"For de love of Moshes do not shpeak so loud," and large drops of cold sweat burst forth upon his forehead.

Padilla had hit the right nail on the head. The Jew was in his power. But the same moment Padilla became his master the Jew became his deadly foe.

When Padilla spoke he knew nothing about the Jew, but shrewdly guessed at his complicity to the highest of crimes from his appearance, avarice, vocation and location. The Jew being fully entitled to all of Padilla's good opinion, and being off his guard at the moment, had completely betrayed himself to his honorable visitor; for this weakness he thoroughly hated Padilla, and almost despised himself. Padilla's threat still rung in his ears, whispering to his heart his life was in danger while Padilla lived.

Aminadab then confessed all that which passed between himself, Rankin (Mr. Jones), Snappy, and the Rev. Joseph Cheathim. Padilla demanded that Aminadab should attend the meeting to be held that evening at Cheathim's house, and turn all his information to the account and benefit of Padilla, whom he was to meet by the big gate at the point of the park where Broadway and Chatham street form a junction, as soon as the meeting at

Cheathim's should be finished, Padilla having concluded it would be safer to pass the eleventh hour of the night at *that* point, than at the Jew's den or the *Five* Points.

After another warning to be faithful to his cause, Padilla left the Jew in not a very quiet state of mind, and regained his lodgings.

About the time Padilla left Aminadab Florence to his own reflection, M. Louis Bremont, Lucretia, and her indefatigable steward were seated in a splendid drawing-room in the palatial mansion of the Frenchman. Bill had just finished his adventures of the previous night, and was patiently awaiting the result of his disclosures. M. Bremont was the first to speak, saying:

"Do you think that Dab—Dab—what do you call that Jew's name?"

"Dabinabad, sir," said Bill.

"I think," said Lucretia, "William has made a mistake. The Jews are very fond of old Scriptural names, and the only one I can remember at all resembling this in sound, is *Aminadab*."

"That's it, mam, that's it," said Rankin.

"Then, do you think this Aminadab Florence is to be trusted?" said Bremont. "And can we rely upon the assistance of Mr. Snapp? The minister, I should think, is perfectly sincere. However, we had better resolve on nothing until after the interview this evening, when I will be able to judge for myself how far dependence can be placed on them. In the course of this morning I am to have an interview with those officers of the police to whom Padilla's letter was written. I shall tell them how far we have proceeded; and, madam, with your permission, I will provide for an interview between them and yourself, that they may have a full description of Padilla's person, to insure his arrest at the earliest moment."

"As you advise, I will act," said Lucretia; "but let me entreat you not to permit my affairs to engross too much of your atten

tion. Commerce is an arbitrary mistress, and demands the undivided attention of her lovers, without which they rarely prosper in their suit."

"I see," said Bremont, "that the brilliant character M. Belleville has given you for useful as well as ornamental education and general knowledge, is well deserved. But the most remarkable feature in your character, is the buoyancy of your spirits under so many severe trials."

"Ah, sir, we little know ourselves until those circumstances arise which call forth the energies into new spheres of action. My present pursuit I consider a sacred duty, therefore I enter upon it cheerfully; and if a shade of sadness sometimes gathers upon my brow, or my heart grows weary, 'tis when I think of those genial spirits of light and love I have left behind me."

M. Bremont rose from his chair, and taking her hand in both of his own, with the delicacy of a lover, and the love of a father, he said:

"Lucretia!—pardon my familiarity—my dearest hope is, that my daughters may successfully imitate your worth. Brave heart! you must, you shall succeed. Such constancy, such forbearance, and such determination, are worthy of the highest admiration, and you have it."

Bill smiled, and his eyes filled up with tears. He could not have told the reason why, to save his life; but whenever he heard Lucretia speak, except on pure business matters, or whenever he heard another speak kindly to her, or of her, he felt, to use his own language, "jist like a babby losing its mother," and he *had* to cry. This time he was detected in his weakness, for being completely absorbed by the strange emotions above referred to, although his eyes were wide open, he saw nothing but the undefinable thought upon the wings of which he was floating in the clouds.

Lucretia, noticing his tearful eyes and total abstraction, said to M. Bremont, with the intention of rousing Bill:

"At what time this evening will you require the attendance of William?"

"Mam," said Bill, responding to his name with a start that betrayed him to himself. Then perceiving he had made a mistake, and that his mistress and M. Bremont were smiling, he blushed, and continued: "I beg your pardon, but some dust got in my eyes, and I thought you called me, mam," and he proceeded to wipe the dust out of his eyes.

"It is now after eleven," said Bremont, in reply to Lucretia's question, "and I expect those officers at my counting-house by two at latest. I wish William to be present, that they may question him. They have subtle wit and quick perception in such matters, and may turn William's evidence to a much better account than we have been able to do."

"I will be there, sir, sure; but if you've no objections, I would like to take a turn about town, to see if Piddilly has cum yet? Snappy and me think we can find out." He looked hard at Lucretia for permission.

"Do you think," said Lucretia, "that this Snappy can be trusted?"

"Snappy aint his name, mam. We call him that for short. His name is Snapp, mam, George Snapp, and as for trustin him, why, *I* can trust him to help *me*, and you needn't trust him at all, because he don't know nothin of the real bisiness, nor I aint agoin to tell him nothin; but he is honest, mam, as sure as you'r born, for he's proved it to me a hundred times. And then, he's sharp, and he catches at chances so quick, that his friends have given him the nic-name of Georgy Nippers. Besides, he told me he half suspected the Jew, and that he considered the minister no better than he should be, and advised me to take a turn about and watch a little before six this evening."

"Did he tell you, William," said Lucretia, "*why* he suspected the Jew and the minister?"

"Oh, yes, mam. He sed, while we was talkin, he was watchin; and in the fust place, the Jew looked curious when I told him to look out for Piddilly; and in the next place, up in the minister's house, he sed he seen the minister's face flush up, and his eyes twinkle twice, when I spoke of the value of the dressing case to a certain lady. And Snappy says them ain't the signs a man hangs out when he means honest."

Bremont and Lucretia glanced significantly at each other when Bill finished speaking, and Bremont said:

"If the Jew prove false, how do you propose to act? Will it not be too late to remedy the evil?"

"That's it, sir. You see the Jew can't do us nothin till he sees Piddilly; so we want to watch about the Jew's house as a likely place to catch *Old Drowsy* goin in or cummin out; and if *we* do, why, we'll jist take him up to the police office at onst."

"Oh, that will never do," said Bremont, referring to the illegality of the arrest, "there being no proof against Padilla yet." But Bill mistook his meaning, and said:

"That's jist what I told the madam, sir. Sed I, what's the use of puttin such a feller in jail, for he's sure to git out agin; whereas, if the madam would only let me crack his neck, there'd be an end of him. 'Taint no crime to kill a duck like him, that is, I don't hardly think so, for he tried to kill me, and if it hadn't bin for me, he'd killed the madam, sir, right before my face."

Bill had grown warm, and had caught himself boasting a little, and he felt slightly ashamed of himself; then turning to his mistress, he continued:

"I beg your pardon, mam, for speaking of that night, but it can't do no harm here, where we're all friends, you know; but it does seem like as if you, mam, had enough cause to wish him dead, and it's like triflin with providence, to keep sparin him all the time. Don't you think so, sir?"

M. Bremont, who thoroughly understood the character and constitution of Mr. Rankin, while he admired the determination he displayed on behalf of his mistress, and the pure, simple earnestness with which he advocated the execution of Padilla without the forms of a trial, was forced to smile at it; and regarding Bill with a kind but earnest look, he said, extending his hand toward Lucretia:

"And would you have the lady whom you serve so faithfully render herself unhappy through life by consenting to the death even of Padilla, except by the sentence of the law, or in self-defence?"

"Who!—I make Miss Madam Lucretia unhappy! (it was the first time he had ever pronounced her name except in his thoughts. Out it came before he knew it, bringing all the blood of his body in his face). I'd rather jerk my heart out with my own hands fust. I never ment that *you*, mam, should have anything to do with it, so long as you wouldn't discharge *me* for settlin his bisness."

Bill reasoned after a fashion of his own. He did not wish Lucretia to order him to strangle Padilla—his will was good enough already; but he wanted her to drop only a single word that could lead him to believe she would not be displeased with him for the killing—and Padilla would have found his way to the shadowy vale of Hades in quick time.

It was then settled that Bill should go with his friend Snapp until two o'clock, at which hour he was to be at M. Bremont's counting, house to meet the officers of justice, who were to be engaged to see Lucretia at nine o'clock that night in M. Bremont's house, at which hour he presumed his interview with Cheathim would be over. Bill and M. Bremont departed, one by the front and the other by the gate at the rear of the house, and Lucretia was left alone, to answer the following letter, just received from her friends in New Orleans:

New Orleans, *January* —, 18—.

My dear Lucretia—My Daughter:

I tremble while I write the question—Have you arrived in safety? If ill should befall you, Elise—my dear Elise—*your* Elise will die. While I write, you are but two days absent, and yet the child has nearly killed me with her sorrow, her silence and her reproachful looks. She seems to regard me as if I were guilty of some great wrong, and I believe I am; for I either should not have permitted your departure, or I should have gone with you. Regrets come too late now. If it be the will of God that you reach my friend M. Bremont in safety, a great load of anxiety will be removed from my heart. Therefore, my Lucretia, do not lose an instant of time, but answer me at once; and if you love my children, write in such a manner as to restore them to me, gay and cheerful. I have none of their society now, except at table. They wander about together from room to room, sometimes without speaking for hours. I am sure a notice of your arrival in *perfect* safety will have a great tendency to restore us all to comfort at least.

Margaret says, she has no heart to write until we hear from you—Elise persists in believing that you are gone forever. You see, dear Lucretia, how much happiness and misery is balancing upon the successful termination of your journey.

Your letter dated at Montgomery was received, and duly taken from me by the girls the moment I entered the house, and poor Nanny was summoned to hear its reading. She too has been broken-hearted since your sudden departure, and speaks to no one—passing most of her time in the apartments of the girls. I have no news for you—send *us* some, and relieve us from the most painful solicitude.

Your truly affectionate friend and father,

Leaumont Belleville.

N. B.—Elise has this moment detected me in writing, and *commands me* to *order you* to come home without delay. I need not tell you how many loving messages are sent—you know her heart. Adieu.

As she finished reading, the tears that had been swelling to her eyes, fell in large drops upon the letter. She did not murmur, but her soul was full of exquisite emotions of love, gratitude, and grief. The joy she felt in being so beloved, was chased away by the sorrow she experienced for being the hapless cause of their

sufferings. She little dreamed how near total destruction that family was soon to be reduced by her own coming misfortunes, which were being rapidly woven in the brain of her evil genius. Sweet Chreechy! Yes, kiss the letter; no one sees you. That's right, answer it at once, and pour out upon the spotless paper the low murmurings of your angel spirit unto those who so dearly love you.

While Lucretia is writing, the reader and I will pursue Padilla, in his sailor's guise, from the house of Aminadab Florence to his own lodgings, which he gained about the time Bremont and Rankin parted from our heroine.

The lair of this gentleman was situated on Cherry street, near Franklin Square. The house was small and obscure, but the neighborhood in which it stood was respectable. The landlady was supposed to be a Cuban by birth, and was the widow of a man who had acted as chief mate on one of Padilla's slavers. She had accompanied her husband on several voyages, and was perfectly hardened to all species of human suffering. She had acted as surgeon's mate in the slaver, and was noted for her perfect insensibility while performing or assisting in the most revolting duties. Her name was Beatrice Lopez. This was the woman to whom Padilla was indebted for his information relative to Alice, the runaway slave.

Having reached his home, he summoned this harpy to his presence, and thus addressed her:

"Beatrice, I want you to hold yourself in constant readiness to leave this house for a few weeks—perhaps, months. You will be required to keep house and attend upon a young lady whom you will treat with the utmost obedience and respect in all things, except one, and that is—touching her escape from the house. She is *never* to walk in the garden, except you attend her *armed*—do you understand me?—armed, I say. If she attempts escape, you must struggle to the last to prevent it; but

if she is likely to prevail, *kill* her as you would a snake. Do you fully understand me? And remember this: if you obey me well, your reward shall be large. If you permit her to escape, your life shall answer it to me—to me! do you hear? You know me, Beatrice—act upon your knowledge."

"I hear you, captain, and heed you, too. Who is the woman?"

"That's none of your business," said Padilla.

"And if I refuse to comply?" said the woman.

"I'll find another to suit my purpose, and leave you to assist yourself through the world. I am wealthy, and liberal to those who serve me faithfully, and you know it; but I can punish when I am disobeyed, and you *should* know that, too, from experience. Can I rely on you? Speak, that I may know how to act, for time presses."

"You can! Where is the house?" said Beatrice.

"I do not know yet, but I think it is a few miles above the city, on or near the North River. When everything is in readiness, you shall be warned to leave town. Myself will conduct you to your temporary home, and give such further instructions as I may deem necessary. Now, prepare me something to eat, for I must get a few hours' sleep before dark, as I have business that will probably keep me out late to-night."

The woman went from the room silently. Padilla threw himself upon a couch, and was soon buried in deep thought. Lucretia was but a single day in advance of him, and he had already made up his loss by the accidental encounter with Aminadab Florence. All that our heroine and her worthy steward had yet achieved was likely to operate directly in Padilla's favor. The reader may guess at a part of his plan of operation by his instructions to Beatrice; and time will tell how keenly he knew how to calculate his chances. Let us leave him musing on the sofa, and turn back to Mr. Rankin at the moment he left M. Bremont's gate.

He steered his course directly to his own lodgings in McDougal street—the place appointed to meet George Snapp, Esq.

The mistress of the house where Bill had taken up his lodgings was a widow of forty summers, and the mother of two fine children, a boy and a girl; the first about fourteen, and the girl about eleven. The lady's name was Somerville. The boy was called *Henry*, and his sister *Rosalie;* and as these young people will find their way into these pages on several occasions, I will devote some little attention to them now.

Henry Somerville was a bold, but respectful and very intelligent boy. His form was slight, though very muscular for his age. His face was round, and even handsome when lighted by the devil-may-care expression that was sure to be found there whenever he was not seriously employed; and then his face became grave and thoughtful. His sister was a most charming little fairy, bearing a strong likeness to her brother, with a temper and disposition of the sweetest description. Their skin was very fair, eyes bright, liquid blue, and hair resembling in color and gloss a piece of highly-polished, new mahogany. They loved each other dearly, and believed their mother to be the most delightful woman in the world. But she, poor soul! was one of these vulgar people always ready to shed tears over the misfortunes and sufferings of others—who will run into the house and bring out a bundle of bread and meat to a beggar, who had the modesty to ask for a cracker—who believe all people are honest, and who will trust again immediately after suffering a deception—a creature entirely unfit for the brilliant age of bankruptcy and embezzlement in which she lived. In short, she was one of those contemptible people of feeling—a style of character rapidly becoming obsolete, thank heaven, particularly in our large cities. So much for Bill's landlady and her darlings.

As Bill approached the front door, he saw Snappy's aspiring nose and the face it belonged to, at the window. As their eyes

met, they smiled, and each gave his head a peculiar jerk, that speaks volumes to those who know this class of New York citzens.

Bill rapped at the street door, which was immediately opened by Rosalie, who, on two days' acquaintance, was a great favorite with the big bearded, big hearted Rankin, who had paid a whole month's rent in advance, by way of establishing a character for honesty and respectability in the house. Rosalie smiled on opening the door, and the worthy steward said:

"Good mornin, my little sweetheart, how is your ma today?"

"My ma is well, I thank you, but I won't be your sweetheart as long as you wear those nasty big red whiskers all around your mouth; ma says they are frightful, and I think so too."

"You don't like my whiskers, hey! Well, will you kiss me if I shave 'em off, Rosy?"

"Oh! I'm sure I will, a dozen times, for I can't bear to look in your face now, Mr. Jones. Besides, you talk so good-natured, and laugh so, I am sure I would like to see your mouth once."

All that portion of his face visible was laughing then, and he said:

"Now mind! you made a promise, and you must keep it; if you don't, nairy nother cake do you git from me. Now jist step in here a minit, said Bill, walking in his parlor, "and I'll show you a sight."

She followed him into the room where Snappy was seated, took off his hat, looked full in the face of the laughing girl, made one grab at the hair on his face, and the next instant he was as clean shaved as a man could possibly be, his whiskers and moustache were hanging in his hand by his side. Bill and Snappy roared with laughter at the astonishment of Rosalie, when the metamorphosis was accomplished. Clasping her little hands together, she said:

"Oh, you wicked man, to go about with false hair on your face! Well, I won't kiss you now, because you've been deceiving somebody else, just like you deceived me."

At that moment Mrs. Somerville, who had heard the laughter, came to the open door, and so great was the change wrought in Bill's appearance by the removal of his whiskers, that she did not know him. And when Rosalie told her mother what had happened, she looked sorrowful, and said:

"I hope, sir, you have not been doing anything so bad that you consider it necessary to go abroad in disguise?"

"That's a clincher, Bill," said Snappy.

An honest smile broke upon the pleasing features of the gladiator, and he said:

"Madam, I ask your pardon for speakin well of myself, but I am not a bad man. I wear this disguise to prewent a bad man from knowin me. I'm in pursuit of him; and as he knows my natural face, why you see I'm compelled to cover it up when I go out. Now this is the truth, upon my soul. But if you don't beleeve me I'll bring a large merchant here to prove it."

"Oh, dear no," said Mrs. Somerville, "I believe you, sir, and I hope you may catch the bad man you are looking for."

"And now, Rosy," said Bill, "whot do you say? Don't you beleeve me, too?"

"Yes, sir, I believe you," said the child.

"And aint you goin to stick to your promise? Didn't you say you would kiss me if I took off my whiskers?"

"Yes, I will keep my promise, for I am not frightened any more since I can see your face." She threw her arms about his neck, which he had placed within her reach, and kissed him, saying:

"Now, don't you forget my cakes," and she ran upstairs with her mother.

"That's a prime little girl, Snappy," said Bill, listening to the

merry laughter of the retiring sylph, "and I'd give someth[illegible] handsome if *she* belonged to me, or another one jist like h[illegible] But now to bisness. I must be at Bremont's counting-house [illegible] two, and we shan't have much time to look about this morning; so jist wait till I mount my reds agin, and we'll be off."

So saying, he put on his red wig, whiskers, and moustache, pulling his fur cap over his eyes, and with his friend went upon their business; but they saw nothing of Padilla, for this reason: that gentleman had just turned in to take his snooze in the back bedroom of Beatrice Lopez's house over in Cherry street.

At two o'clock precisely, Bill, having left Snappy at Tommy Thompson's old corner, entered the counting-house of Louis Bremont, on Pearl street, and being conducted to the private office of that gentleman, was at once confronted by Messrs. Gilbert Hays and Alexander Jackson, the officers to whom Padilla had written the letter intrusted to Bill for safe delivery. It *was* delivered, and those gentlemen possessed themselves of its contents, *except the check*, which M. Bremont insisted should be retained for the purpose of restoring it to its villainous author, as soon as he could be handled. This was no loss to the officers, however, for M. Bremont told them they should name any sum for their services, if they succeeded in recovering the stolen property.

A full explanation was gone into as to how matters stood at that moment. Bill then thoroughly described Padilla and the disguises he had known him to wear, the broken nose and lizard eyes being the strong features for recognition.

Bremont then informed the officers of the intended meeting that evening at six o'clock, and agreed to meet them at his house at nine, that they might know the result of that conference, and also that the lady herself might describe the slave Alice to them. This being agreed on, the party separated. Bill going to his dinner with Snappy, and the detectives to mature their plans of operation.

And now we must visit the mansion of Joseph Cheathim, for the purpose of witnessing the promised interview between that gentleman and Rachael Hawthorne, the lady whom we saw in his society last night. The obliging reader will now suppose himself in the very room in which the moving mirror is. Everything wears the same appearance it wore on our first visit, except in this particular: there was no one in the room or in the adjoining chamber, and there was a sealed letter lying on the centre table, addressed to Rachael. In a few moments, the mirror moved from the wall as before, and Rachael entered the room. Glancing about the apartment. Seeing that she was the only occupant, she seated herself calmly in a large easy-chair, and by degrees sunk into a fit of musing, her eyes being almost closed, and her body in a perfect state of listlessness. She was waiting for Joseph. This time she was clad in a close-fitting, black velvet habit, that set off her enchanting figure to the best advantage.

She remained perfectly quiet for about thirty minutes, then casting a glance at the timepiece, and noticing it was almost three o'clock, she started to her feet and once more surveyed the room; but this time her eyes were wide open and the color had slightly faded from her lips, which, from their naturally voluptuous appearance, were compressed into an expression of revenge and determination. At that moment she resembled her maternal ancestress Judith, when about to disencumber the shoulders of the Assyrian warrior—*if the picture galleries are to be relied on.*

She tried all the doors communicating with Joseph's side of the house—they were all fast and the keys carefully removed. In returning toward the secret entrance on her side of the house, her eye lit upon the letter directed to *Rachael.* In a second she saw the trick—her face and neck became crimson with concentrated rage. She tore open the missive, read aloud its contents, which were as follows:

MADAM:

Forgive me! forgive *me*, as you hope to be forgiven. I had not the courage to endure an interview that was to tear from my heart an image—an idol at whose shrine I had so enthusiastically bowed down, even at the hazard of my immortal soul. I dared not trust my frailty—my unsubstantial conversion from the evil of my past life—within the radius of your fascinating, yet unhallowed charms. Time and absence alone can perfect the reformation, which the dawning light of Divine mercy, vouchsafed to my erring heart, has so happily begun. To part thus, Rachael, is to suffer pain on earth; but a meek endurance of such anguish, will purchase peace and happiness that shall endure through all eternity. Pray with me Rachael—once passionately, guiltily loved, now enshrined in my heart with all the chaste affection of a loving brother—pray with me, that the spirit of pure repentance may strengthen us to endure the affliction—the fruit of our disobedience—that our benighted passions have wrought upon us. Let our humiliation equal, in sincerity, the recklessness of our past transgressions of Divine Law, and the angels of light and mercy will unite our souls in heaven.

Farewell—not to you, sister, but to the guilty past; and may the holy influence, that snatches me from ungodly pleasures and eternal death, to earthly sorrow and everlasting life and joy, be thine also.

When we meet in the bosom of our church, let it be as true penitents, whose only emulation is to excel in earnestness to recover the crown of virtue we have sacrificed together.—Farewell.

When she had finished reading the letter, it was carefully refolded and placed in her pocket. She then reseated herself, reclining her head upon her hand, and tapping the floor rapidly with her little gaitered foot, but displaying no other sign of chagrin or impatience. Rachael was reflecting. The letter was so skillfully drawn, and with so little exaggeration (had it been an emanation of a Christian mind and soul) that her resolution faltered. Had she known Joseph only half as well as the reader knows him, she would have closed the secret passage, and waited until he came that she might slay him (she was prepared for action), or until death by starvation had removed her from his

way. Yet, notwithstanding her wounded pride had forever shut him from her heart, an idea of justice forbade her crushing him until she should be thoroughly convinced of his baseness and treachery, which she now only suspected.

On this reasoning, she resolved to wait a little longer, in the hope of perfectly satisfying her doubts; and with an expression more of sorrow than of anger, she arose from her seat—entered the secret passage and closed the mirror door behind her.

The mirror had scarcely regained its original position, when the door of an antique bookcase standing in the front room between the Madonna and the window—opened, displaying another door in the rear of the press, opening into a small room adjoining. The old bookcase had been placed so as to conceal the only door by which these rooms were at all connected; and Joseph Cheathim entered the room so lately occupied by Rachael Hawthorne. His expression was of the liveliest satisfaction, a little mixed, however, with alarm. Joseph's politics were of a school more resembling that of Lysander than Lycurgus—of wolf and fox, his character more closely resembled the latter animal. He had the teeth and temper of both, but the daring of the one was concealed beneath the cunning of the other. Joseph was a skillful man, and a daring one; but his good genius sometimes deserted him.

Joseph entered the room, smiled and then laughed at the success of his letter. He had thought to have seen a storm from his hiding-place, whence he had seen and heard all that was said and done; and he was not a little gratified at the apparent effort his penitent and saintly letter had wrought upon his dreaded companion in profligacy. He could not be mistaken, Rachel was sincerely affected by his letter. She evidently believed him sincere, and had inwardly resolved to embrace his advice at once, and make atonement for the past by a life of rigorous virtue for the future.

As these thoughts crowded upon his mind, pleasantly enough, and he believed himself absolved from any further duty to his once bewitching Rachael, a new face and form were rising in his mind to compensate him for the sacrifice he had just made on the shrine of his public safety. Then he mused upon his new triumph—then he was no longer a sublunary animal, but an enchanter, who rode upon the golden clouds of his own creating, until he reached the Paradise of Mahomet, which is so far removed from earth, that the enthusiast did not hear the slight noise made by the reopening of the secret passage and the reëntering of his ci-devant *Psyche*, who—having left her kerchief, had returned for it.

As might be expected, the sight of Joseph in such a happy humor, the open passage through the bookcase into a room, the existence of which was entirely unknown to her, were subjects too absorbing to permit the handkerchief to occupy her thoughts for a moment. At a glance, she saw all his baseness and hypocrisy, and her own artful abandonment by the man who had destroyed her honor and self-esteem.

A thousand furies rioted in her heart, and if every hair he wore had a life, "*her great revenge had stomach for them all.*"

With the speed of lightning she drew a poniard from her dress, and with the whine of a tigress bounded toward him, the hand uplifted against his treacherous heart. The hot, hissing curse that escaped through her clenched teeth, reached his ear before the steel did his body, and starting forward, turning at the same instant, he stumbled on a couch of cushions, and had barely time to interpose one of them to receive the descending blow aimed at his bosom, when down came the steel, and in the hair barrier "*found a bloodless sheath.*"

Both wolf and fox swept over the face of Joseph, but the latter prevailed; and while she struggled to release her armed hand from his trembling grip, he had resolved on the best course

to pursue. Finding it impossible to force the dagger from her hand, and himself growing more feeble every instant (no words were spoken by either), *Le Renard* rushed against her with all his remaining strength, releasing his hold at the instant, and hurling Rachael to the opposite side of the room; then, casting himself upon his knees, his hands clasped and uplifted, terror and despair struggling for the empire of his face, he cried out:

"Mercy! mercy! Rachael, have mercy on my sinful soul! I am unfit to die!"

In struggling, their positions were reversed, and rushing upon him a second time, she seized his crisp-brown hair with her left hand, as he knelt; lifting the dagger to plunge it in his heart, when she saw her husband slowly entering through the secret passage. She became rigid as the steel she held uplifted in the air.

Joseph—on whose flesh huge drops of clammy sweat were hanging—not feeling the dagger in his body, ventured to glance upward to her face. She stood erect, her left foot slightly advanced, her right sustaining the weight of her body, the right arm raised to its utmost limit; but her eyes were fixed upon her slowly approaching, smiling husband.

As Joseph's back was toward the secret entrance, he knew nothing of the apparition, whose timely entrance had saved his life, and the appearance of Rachael smote him with genuine awe. His first impression was that reason had deserted her; but the next instant he saw the soft, white hand of a man stretched over his head, and rest gently on the lady's hand fastened in his hair. And then a whole body appeared by his side, and the husband's left arm was gently entwined about the sylph-like form of Rachael, who released Joseph from her grasp, let the dagger fall to the floor, and her head drop on the bosom of her injured husband. She did not weep—she could not. Shame, and a full sense of her own treachery were burning her heart to

ashes, and she could not call up a single tear to quench the fire. Nor could Joseph immediately arise from his kneeling position, so terror-stricken was he by the incidents of the last few moments. The singular expression that played upon the features of Adam Hawthorne, while he still held his faithless wife in his embrace, gradually restored him; and rising to his feet, trembling in every joint, the cold sweat bursting from every pore of his death-like skin, he continued to gaze with a species of fascination in the face of him he had so foully injured.

At length, Rachael, with averted eyes, gently released herself from the tender restraint of her husband's arms, and turning her head, saw the terrific look of Joseph, his eyes being fixed on *that* face she had not yet dared to look into. Joseph felt that she was regarding him, and without speaking, he raised his hand and pointed to her husband in such a strange manner, that she overcame her self-debasement and turned her eyes full upon him.

A single glance revealed to her the whole truth. The vacillating reason of Adam Hawthorne had been hurled from its tottering throne, and he stood there, a helpless, speechless idiot forever. The blush of shame that had mantled her queenly brow fled, and the pallor of death came in its stead. She made a sudden start toward him, then as suddenly stopped, as if her touch would pollute him. Adam smiled (as only idiots smile), and extended his arms playfully toward her, rolling his head about like an infant sporting in its mother's arms—his tongue, meanwhile, playing about his cheeks and lips as if struggling to articulate. She went to him, placed one arm around his neck, drew his head upon her bosom, pressed one kiss on his brow; then, lifting her face so as to overlook that head, now pillowed for the first time upon her bosom (her every feature throbbing with agony—her eyes heavily injected with blood), gazing fiercely at Joseph, she said:

"To-morrow at noon, in *my* drawing-room. Do you mark me! to-morrow at noon. Come, or by the memory of *his* deep wrongs (and she caressed the passive head of Adam), I'll hunt you to the death, even at the very altar of your church. I'll keep my word, I swear!"

And she raised her hand and eyes to that Heaven whose sacred ordinances she had trampled under foot. Then bending tenderly over her husband, with one arm about his body, she led him to his chamber through the secret passage, leaving Joseph to ponder on the threat he thoroughly believed would be carried into execution, and to prepare himself for his interview with Bremont, Rankin, and Aminadab Florence. He had intended to have gone to Mr. Fink's house to see the slave, but now it was too late, and we must leave him till six in the evening to settle his spirits, which had been terribly shaken up by the events of the last hour

CHAPTER XII

AMINADAB FLORENCE.

On the same day, the City Hall clock struck six at the moment M. Bremont's carriage drove up to the door of the Reverend Joseph Cheathim, when Mr. Rankin and M. Bremont alighted, mounted the front steps of the mansion, rung the bell, and were ushered into the poor reception-room, where, to their surprise, they found old Florence and George Snapp, Esq., engaged in a social chat.

These worthy gentlemen received the new comers with all due respect, Snappy doing the honors in the absence of the Reverend Joseph, who had not yet descended from his devotions. They did not wait very long, however, for the parson soon made his appearance, looking as cold and calm as ever, but a little more ghastly. And the party at once proceeded to business.

Joseph admitted his society had received and cared for the slave Alice, and was proceeding to justify the stealing of this species of property, when M. Bremont cut him short thus:

"You will excuse me, sir, for the interruption, but the business I am here for, is in no manner connected with or affected by the war of piracy and plunder so skillfully conducted by you abolitionists against the citizens of the South."

"You employ strong language to express your disapprobation of a course of conduct adopted by the most enlightened governments of Europe, and by a large majority of the citizens of this great Republic," said Joseph.

"My dear sir," said the polite Frenchman, "I have expressed neither disapprobation nor applause; and I believe the only strong language I employed, consisted of two words—*piracy* and *plunder*. And if the English language affords no more musical words to express the forcible and fraudulent carrying away of other people's property, I am quite sure I should not be censured for using them."

"The word *property*, used in this connection, *we* consider the great point of dispute. We deny the right of any man to have property in his fellow-man; and we act on this principle," said Joseph.

"I admit that you state simple facts; but I am constrained to regard your facts as being utterly untenable, when I know that the Federal Constitution and the laws of Congress fully recognize the slave as the property of his master. And although I am an alien, and in no manner entitled to any of the political rights of a citizen, I yet feel myself entitled to all other privileges under the charter of the nation's sovereignty; and if any set of people in the South were to organize for the purpose of taking my merchandise from me against my will, I should most certainly consider them a band of robbers, and demand of the government protection against their incursions."

"But, my dear sir," said Joseph, "you don't seem to understand"——

"I never will understand," said Bremont, interrupting Joseph, "how any man, or set of men, more particularly citizens of a democracy, can have the assurance to contend against a legitimate law because some or all of its features are displeasing to them. If the law be a bad one, repeal it in the manner pointed out *by law*; if the sense of the nation be against you, why yield to the decrees the majority have a clear constitutional right to enact and enforce?"

"But they have no such constitutional right"——

Bremont once more, and rather impatiently, interrupted Joseph, saying:

"I beg your pardon, my dear sir, you are entirely in error. I have studied the American Constitution (long before evil-designing men destroyed the legitimate form of government of my native country, under the pretence of establishing a democracy there) with wonder and admiration, and I distinctly remember the following clause in that compact:

"'No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.'

"You will find that language, sir, in the last paragraph of the second section of the fourth article of your Constitution. And if you will look at article twelve of the amendments of that instrument, you will find the following emphatic language:

"'The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.'

"And, my dear sir, if you will re-peruse the sixth article of the Constitution, you will find the following language, which, it strikes me, all honorable, sensible men must admit, settles the question of the right of the slaveholder to his property, and the *wrong* of the fanatic to seduce and steal it away, beyond all doubt:

"'This Constitution, and the laws of the United States made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made or which shall be made under the authority of the United States, shall be the Supreme Law of the land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby; anything in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding. The senators and representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several State

legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution.'

"And now, my friend, since you have warmed me a little on this subject, permit me to say, that having well considered the clear and concise organic law, just quoted by me, and fully believing that any boy ten years of age, capable of reading, can perfectly well understand its meaning—I regard any judge or justice of the peace in the United States, as an unqualified perjurer and a disgrace to the pure and simple science of law, who—with this law before his eyes—will interpose any obstacle, either directly or collaterally, to the owner, when he seeks to reclaim *any person held to service or labor* by the laws of that State of which he is a citizen."

"You forget, sir," said Joseph, "that there is a higher law"——

Once more M. Bremont had the bad taste to interrupt the saint, and he said:

"There is no law higher than the Scriptures which you profess to teach; and that instructs us that the servant owes obedience to the master, and that no man shall violate the law. And so, my Christian friend, we will drop the discussion until business of less importance than that which now presses will permit us to renew it. But this information I tender to you gratuitously: when you want me to deliver a lecture for the benefit of your abolition societies, I shall be most happy to enlighten the brotherhood of that remarkable fraternity."

The Jew was in ecstasies with the argumentative powers of M. Bremont, but for what reason, *Snappy* was yet unable to determine. However, the discussion closed, and Joseph, who had done remarkably well, for a man whose nervous system had been so stoutly shaken a few hours before, related to Bremont, Rankin (Jones), Snapp and the Jew, all that he knew about the

slave Alice; but he concealed the place of her abode, promising to visit the negress early on the morrow, and find out if possible where the dressing-case and valuables were secreted.

Joseph fully believed all that had been told him by Bill. He knew the commercial house of M. Bremont & Co., and expressed himself perfectly willing to assist in the recovery of the things, provided no effort was to be made toward the restoration of Alice to her master. In the event of success, M. Bremont engaged to give the minister (for charitable purposes) one thousand dollars, and to reward the Jew liberally for his trouble also.

Aminadab was highly delighted, for the box and its contents were becoming more valuable to him, at every turn of the affair, and he inwardly resolved to make something from all the parties concerned. There were to be no more meetings at the house of Joseph, who was to visit M. Bremont's counting-house, at an earl hour in the morning, with such information as he might collec from Alice, and any other source.

Snappy then proposed the present company should resolv itself into a committee of five, to keep a sharp lookout f Don Padilla, and to give each other the earliest intelligence. T this, all the party heartily agreed—the Jew more loudly th any other; and the business of the meeting being over, it journed *sine die*.

On reaching the street, M. Bremont proposed to take away in the coach, bnt that gentleman, in obedience to a jer the tail of his coat, by Mr. Georgy Nippers, declined on tence of business. M. Bremont then bidding the three night, drove away.

"Come, boysh," said the Jew, "I musht git to de sho quick ash I can. Vill you valk my vay?"

"See here, Uncle Florence," said Snappy, "you aint afee go to your own cribb, alone in the dark, are you; becaus see, old feller, Mr. Jones and me have got to take a bit of

about Wauxhall Garden, before we go home. But if you're afeered, why jist say so, and I'll put you in a cab and send you home."

"No, no; I beesh not afraid to go alone, but I vaunted your company if you had no better bishness."

"Well, then, good night Dabinabab," said Bill, "and we'll see you early in the mornin."

Saying which, Bill and Georgy Nippers crossed Broadway, toward the Bowery, while the unsuspecting descendant of Aaron, chuckling at having got rid of his companions so easily, went on his way—not home—to join Padilla at the big gate of the Park at the point nearest Saint Paul's Church.

For reasons best known to himself, Snappy told Bill he strongly suspected the Jew had already seen Padilla, and that he was now on his way to meet the Spaniard; and therefore, Florence should be followed, even if he travelled all night. Without any further explanation, the companions parted company, one taking each side of the street, keeping the Jew in full sight by aid of the lamps and shop window lights, until he reached the corner of Broadway and Anthony street, at which point the Jew paused and looked about him. He stood immediately in front of the door of a celebrated fashionable rum-shop, known as the *Finish*, of which the well known *Jack Martin* was proprietor. Now, the thought occurred to Aminadab, that he would need something strong to sustain him through the coming interview with Padilla, so he stepped in and called for a brandy cocktail, and paid his sixpence for it, with the courage of a Christian.

In the meantime, Bill and Snappy had consulted and settled their plans of operation, being now fully convinced that the Jew was playing double. In a short time, Florence left the house, and looking cautiously about, started down Broadway toward the Park, which he entered at the Murray street gate, and continued downward until the big gate at the junction of Chatham street and

Broadway stopped him. Pausing, and peering through the iron railings, he saw Padilla out on the sidewalk, and making a low, hissing sound, soon attracted that gentleman's attention. He then told Padilla it would be safer to converse *within*, than outside the Park, as there was less chance of being surprised by listeners. Padilla assented, entering the Park without delay, and was soon in close conversation with Uncle Florence, walking slowly up the pathway on the Broadway side, until the Jew swore by the rod of Aaron he was worn out and must rest, when they seated themselves upon the withered grass, and pursued their discourse.

According to arrangement, Bill kept watch from a distance, and Snappy, who was small and supple, and entirely unknown to Padilla, crept about in the grass until he worked himself within earshot of the villains, and overheard all the material points of their conversation.

Padilla—whom he immediately recognized, even in the uncertain lights of the surrounding lamps, from Bill's description—commenced speaking just as George Nippers got within hail. He inquired of the Jew all the particulars of the interview at Cheat him's house, and the Jew, in his turn, related all that the reader already knows. Then Padilla seemed to reflect upon what he had heard, while the Jew remained silent for a long time. At length Padilla said, in a tone of voice that betrayed some excitement and less caution than the occasion seemed to demand:

"Florence, you must bribe that man!"

Florence started at the suddenness of this proposition, and said:

"Bribe de minishter of de Lord! Vhy! vhy! does you vish to make a shinner of a shaint? Holy Abraham, vhat conshienshes dees Shentile have! Bribe a rabbi!"

And he threw up his hands and eyes in pious horror at the great scandal his integrity received by even listening to the proposal. Snappy laughed in the grass, and Padilla said:

"Why, you infamous dog, do you pretend to any particle of honor? Now listen to me attentively. Since I first saw you, I have discovered how much you were suspected by the authorities as being concerned in the murder of the United States marine, Newman. Don't jump, friend Florence, but listen. You escaped because a certain Ben Hazzard swore on the trial that he was with you in your den at the time the murder was committed, at the foot of Roosevelt street. You paid Mr. Hazzard for that lie, and I, having looked up that gentleman, have taken him into my employment, having paid him a part of his reward to speak the truth whenever I shall demand it. What do you think of that? Now, sir, you must—do you mind—you must bribe that minister to get those things for me. And if bribery fails, you must watch your chance and steal them as soon as you know he has them in his possession. And if you fail to accomplish my orders, I will produce Ben Hazzard and two more of your friends, who shall so clearly fix your complicity to that murder, that your neck will stretch as surely as you are seated by my side now."

At this speech of the Spaniard, the Jew shook in every limb, and a cold sweat oozed from every pore of his wrinkled hide. Then he nervously glanced up and down the Park, while his right hand twitched and jerked toward the breast of his coat. All these symptoms were not lost upon Padilla, who was an adept in crime and all the various motives that prompt it. He *felt* the Jew hated him from the moment he had guessed his secret. From his knowledge of men generally, and the keen observation he had bestowed upon Aminadab Florence in particular, he religiously believed the Jew would take his life whenever a chance should present itself. Well knowing he had nothing to expect from the Jew beyond what could be wrung from his fears, Padilla had possessed himself of the knowledge we have already heard him display with a view to serve his purpose. And to prevent all chance of being surprised by this degenerate descendant of Ruth

and Naomi, he had come to the present appointment fully prepared for action.

Noticing, as we have said, the effect of his language upon Aminadab, he quietly drew a pistol from his pocket, and suffered it to rest on his left knee, with the muzzle within twenty-four inches of the Jew's heart, or, rather, the region where the heart is supposed to hang. The Jew's restless eye measured the length of its glossy barrel in the dusky light an instant after it made its appearance, and he at once concluded the time was not yet come.

Padilla, observing the effect of his exhibition upon the nervous system of his friend, said:

"Well, my friend, what have you to say to my demand? Do you think you will succeed?"

"Holy Abraham!" said Aminadab, "where did my mashter find Ben Hashard?"

"No matter where I found Ben Hazzard, but tell me if you think you will succeed?"

"I musht sucsheed or I musht pe hang'd."

"That's it," said the Spaniard. "You have guessed the alternative the first time."

"Vell, I musht try."

"Well said, my honest Israelite; and if you *do* succeed, I'll give you as many silver dollars as you can carry in a sack at one time."

"I'tsh a bargain," said Aminadab, completely reanimated by the mention of the reward, and entirely forgetting that his tempter could hang him at will. It was then stipulated that the Jew should call on M. Bremont in the morning to learn the result of Joseph Cheathim's visit to the slave Alice, and bring the news to Padilla at *Pete Byard's* Battery House at two o'clock.

Padilla then started to his feet, and told the Jew to remain seated until he had left the Park, then to go home and sleep upon his new undertaking; and in a few moments Padilla had turned the corner of Ann street on his way home.

Aminadab Florence was certainly in for a night of adventures. Although his flesh had been made to crawl and his bones to ache by the deliberate torture of Padilla, he was yet to be subjected to another style of argument, entirely different in its immediate effects, but tending to the same end—obedience.

Padilla had no sooner disappeared, than Aminadab regained his feet and stood a moment brushing the dust and gravel from the seat of his pantaloons, the tufts of withered grass not affording much protection at that season of the year. Having satisfied himself that the soil was removed from his garments, he started up the Park to Chambers street, thence into Elm street, and was pushing on toward his home, when just as he reached the corner of Elm and Duane streets, where there stood an untenanted rookery, Bill and Snappy darted upon him—crammed a handkerchief in his mouth and dragged him into the back portion of the shanty. Here Bill drew forth a very small dark lantern, merely to show Aminadab who his captors were. The Jew no sooner saw Snappy holding a foot of whalebone with half a pound of lead fastened at one end, in his uplifted hand, and Bill in a most menacing attitude bending over him, than he knew he had been watched, and that his meeting with Padilla was no longer a secret; and he began to invent a *lie* to screen himself from the wrath of Bill and his companion. The profound silence of that slimy apartment was first broken by Bill, who said, addressing the terrified Jew in a hoarse whisper:

"Now, I am about to take that rag from your mouth, but mind what I tell you—if you offer to make the smallest kind of a noise when it is out, I'll strangle you to death before you can say Jack Robinson. Do you hear?" The Jew nodded yes. "Will you mind?" He gave another assent, and Bill took the muffle from his mouth.

"Now, Bill," said Georgy Nippers, "let me speak to my uncle, for he knows me better than you. And if he don't come right

square down with the whole truth, why I'll jist turn him over to you for punishment, which I know will be choking. Now, sir, I'll save some time and prewent you from tellin a thousand lies all for nothin. I heered you and old Padilly talkin in the Park—I heered you tell all about the meetin' up in Waverley Place this evening—I heered him tell you to bribe the minister to git them things for him, and, daddy, I heered him say he would hang you for the murder of that marine named Newman; and that Ben Hazzard was already in his pay to tell the truth whenever it should be required. Say! old *Nebberconnezzer*, what do you think of that?"

If the Jew's life depended on an immediate answer, he would have been compelled to die; for to Snappy's question he could make no answer. In the Jew's opinion, the devil himself had not been a more attentive listener than George Snapp, Esq., to his conversation with Padilla an hour previous. In fact, Aminadab began to think that he was dealing with devils entirely. In one short day and night Padilla, Snappy and Company, had exhibited a most perfect knowledge of his most important secrets, and he found himself completely in the power of these men. And what made the matter still worse, and insured his destruction—in his own mind—was, the perfect and unextinguishable hatred of the Jones and Snappy faction, to the Spaniard, and *vice versâ*. To disobey or betray either was certain death to him. Not to promise everything to his present captors, provoked strangulation instanter. And to complete his misery, the devil and his invention seemed to have deserted him—he was dumb.

"Come! speak out, blast your picter," said Bill, "or I'll give you some, any how! Speak, you black-muzzled rangatang, or I'll squeeze the gizzard out of you."

He seized Aminadab by the breast and loins with his brawny hands and gave him a sample of what he might expect if he did not obey. The Jew squealed out:

"I vill! I vill! Mishter Shones—good Mishter Shones, don't kill me in dish dark plashe!"

"What odds where you are killed, you infernal old thief—you murderer—you treacherous devil!"

"Don't shpeak too loud, Mishter Shones—dear Mishter Shones de vatchmans may hear you."

"Cuss your ugly mug, I've a good mind to drag you to jail at onst," said Bill "and make an oath on you for murder; and I will, too, if you don't tell everything you know about that brother murderer of yours—Padilla."

A perfect confidence on the part of the Jew, that the gentlemen into whose hands he had fallen would perform death upon him where he lay prostrate on the slimy floor, if he did not comply with their wishes, brought him to his senses a little, and he swore by the beard of Moses he would be their slave.

"Now, git up and speak out like a man," said Bill, "and if you ain't a fool and play your cards right, we'll show you how to get rid of Piddilly, as well as the rope. But mind now! no dodging—no playing double except for the benefit of the angel woman that I serve; for if we catch you at it onst—only jist onst, if I don't cut your liver clean out, I'm d—d, that's all."

The Jew believed him, and then he related all that passed between him and Padilla from the first moment they met to the present time. He then solemnly promised that he would deceive Padilla at every turn and convey all information of his progress to the two friends at once, for which purpose he was to call at Tommy Thompson's corner every evening at six o'clock to meet Snappy on the subject—*that* gentleman having deemed it prudent not to let Aminadab know Bill's location.

The party then left the ruin in which their interesting meeting had been held, and the Jew was permitted to depart without further harm. Rankin and Snappy parted at the next corner, after agreeing to meet at Bill's lodgings at nine in the morning.

Bill then proceeded to Waverley Place and told M. Bremont, who was yet up, writing to New Orleans, all that had transpired.

All plans of action were deferred till they should hear the report of Joseph Cheathim in the morning, and the steward retired to rest without seeing Lucretia.

The reader will remember, that Joseph Cheathim had promised to call on Alice at the house of Amos Fink, a respectable butcher, in whose family Alice was acting as child's nurse—in the morning; well, Joseph had no intention of waiting half so long. He had been so shaken by Rachael that day, he needed some other excitement to balance him. Therefore, as soon as M. Bremont's party had left his house, he prepared himself and started for the house of Amos Fink, which was situated over in Delancy street near the Bowery.

Having reached the spot, he vigorously employed the street door knocker and was soon in the little family parlor. As the Fink family were members of Joseph's church, and they had the most unbounded veneration for him, they were not displeased nor surprised at his visit although it was near nine o'clock. He soon made known his business, stating that the former master of Alice had arrived in search of her. At his request he was shown upstairs into a room where he could converse with the negress in private, by the oldest daughter of Fink—a girl about sixteen years of age, with handsome features and a plump person; her name was Susan, and she was remarkable for nothing except her admiration for the minister of her church.

"Well! Alice," said Joseph, addressing the veritable runaway of whom we have heard so much, "have you concluded to deal honestly with me for all the good I have done to you?"

"Master Cheathim, i'se always bin honest wid you. I tell you I fotch noffen from Master Padilla, not so much as to buy dis chile a frock."

"Yes! you have told me so, many times; but you lie when

you say so. Now tell me at once what you have done with that little inlaid dressing-case containing child's toys and apparel? You surely will not deny that you stole such a box when you left your master's house."

"Well, sence you knows about de box, I *did* take it, cause I loved de young misses wot used to play wid de traps. She was treated mighty bad by my master—much more as me or any other nigger in de place. She used to cry becaus he called her his slave, and I knowed she was white all along. But a nigger aint noffen no how, when he's a slave, and cant take no oaf. And dis chile ment to steal dat box for young missus; and when it was stole I couldn't find her nowhere, so I had to take it along when I come here."

"And what was the young lady's name?"

"Her name is *Lucreechy*?"

"Do you not know that she is now in this city searching for this very box?—and that your master is here also in search of it and you?"

"Well! suppose he be, are you goin to give me up to be a slave agin?"

At this question, she eyed him with a clear, cunning, side-long glance that told much.

"By no means, said Joseph, if you act properly and surrender the box to the injured lady; she has powerful friends in New York, and will reward you richly for your service. Come, now, give me the box and I will take it to her."

"You go to fass, Master Cheathim. I must see de young lady fust, and I must put de box in her own hand. Suppose you bring her here? hey!"

"That will never do," said Joseph.

"Den fotch me to her," said Alice.

"I have no time to waste with you, Alice; either give me the box or I abandon you to your old master." As he finished speaking,

he took his hat in his hand, walked toward the door, paused and looked around at the slave as if for an answer. He met her gaze, she smiled sardonically, and Joseph left the room.

Not much information elicited from the last witness, Joseph thought as he reentered the front parlor downstairs.

In speaking of the stubbornness of Alice in not giving the information he desired (the Finks being already acquainted with her history), Mrs. Fink said that Alice had told her all about the box, and that it was left for safe keeping with an old colored doctress named Becky Woods, who belonged to Mr. Cheathim's church.

Joseph's eyes glittered and his teeth gleamed when he heard this, but he suppressed his exultation in the most masterly manner, saying carelessly, that as Alice had requested to see the lady to whom these things belonged, he had concluded to comply with her wishes and bring the lady to receive the case in her own hands. Then bidding the family good night, he was lighted to the hall door by Susan.

His resolution was taken at once. He knew Becky Woods, the colored doctress, well, and that his influence over her was supreme. Therefore, although it was now half-past ten o'clock, he resolved to visit her at once, and possess himself of the coveted treasure.

With this view, he directed his steps to Elizabeth near Prince street, and in a few moments was seated in Becky's back parlor, where this very antiquated daughter of Africa was studying her Bible with all the earnestness of a devout Christian.

"The Lord bless me, Doctor Cheathim, there must certainly be something very ! *very* wrong indeed, to bring you *clear* here, *this* time of night through the cold. You must be very careful, doctor, and not get sick. We can't spare you from our pulpit. You had better take a little warm *sas-a-fax* tea when you get home ; it will fetch you a nice sweat and make you feel quite comfortable. But what on *earth* is the matter, doctor ?"

From this sample, we may judge something of the character of Becky Woods. She was an honest, unsuspecting negro wench, a sincere Christian, could read and write, was about fifty-eight or sixty years of age, who, from having acted as nurse for many years, and stowing away all she learned, had, for the last fifteen years of her life, taken to that branch of medicine which is founded upon roots, leaves, bark and flowers; hence she was known as the doctress by the thousands, whose innocent stomachs and bowels she had caused to throb with anguish with her sas-a-fax, snake root, tansy and lobelia.

"Becky!" said Joseph, "I will tell you in a few words *why* I am here at this time of night. Alice sent me for the dressing-case and toys which she left with you for safety. The lady Lucretia, to whom they belong, has arrived expressly for the box. Her friends were with me this evening, and I have undertaken to restore to her the long lost treasures. They are relics, by which she sets much store."

"Certainly doctor; but I am surprised Alice did not come herself."

"It was late this evening when I saw her, and she had just been taking some snake-root tea for a cold, and could not venture out in the night air."

"I see," said Becky, "I told her to be careful of herself, or her cold would turn to consumption. Excuse me a few moments, doctor, and I will bring the box. She always told me she was saving it for Miss Lucretia. I'll bring it in a moment," and she left the room.

Presently she returned, bearing in her hands an ordinary sized dressing-case curiously inlaid with pearl and silver. She placed it on the table and showed its contents to Doctor Cheathim. The lock of the case was broken. Joseph made some unimportant remark—spoke of the lateness of the hour, and with the box under his cloak, left the house of Becky Woods about the same

moment the feverish Jew entered his own sanctuary after his interview with Bill and Snappy as related.

In the meantime, Rachael, who had bound Joseph to visit *her* the next day on pain of death, thinking it might be as well to keep up a watch upon her late lover, had just entered the mirror chamber stealthily to reconnoitre; not finding Joseph, she stood for a moment undetermined how to act, when the sound of a footstep approaching from Joseph's side of the house arrested her attention; she entered the secret passage and closed the entrance near enough to conceal the fact that it had been recently opened —just leaving a crack large enough through which she could see what passed in the room, as well as hear all that might be said. Joseph was fond of talking to himself, and Rachael knew it.

The lady was not mistaken in her surmise. Joseph entered the room with the box under his arm. He placed it on the very table where Rachael had found the letter. Disrobing himself of his cloak, coat, hat, cravat and boots, he seated himself near the table and deliberately examined each article in the box, and devoted himself to searching for any secret drawer that it might possibly contain; and his efforts were rewarded. He found a secret drawer which contained a full statement written by Padilla addressed to Lucretia, giving a history of his love for her mother, Ephigenia, the cause of his hatred and his desire to do ultimate justice to the stolen child. This paper had evidently been written at that period when Padilla had provided for Lucretia in the family of Depasso, and left her as he had said, he thought, forever. The reader must remember, the box was Padilla's, the articles it contained alone had been stolen at the time of Lucretia's abduction.

Be it remembered, that although the Reverend Joseph Cheathim was not a loud—but low, soft speaker, he often *thought* with so much energy that it was a common thing for him to hold a conversation with himself. Now this is a very great failing, par-

ticularly when allied to a mind and heart surcharged with secrets of a sinful character. Our friend Joseph was made to feel the force of this proposition. When he had examined the trinkets and garments and carefully perused the paper found in the secret drawer, he commenced to think very hard, and from thinking he advanced to speaking. He could not help it, he was compelled to argue the case with himself; and thus he spoke, while the magic mirror opened a little more, emitting from its margin, the light of two rather fierce, beautiful black eyes—of course the eyes belonged to Rachael.

"This man, Padilla, I believe to be a great rascal. And yet I don't see any motive for his present hatred toward this Lucretia —I wonder if she's beautiful? No matter, there's time enough to think of that. It is clear to my mind that the lady or her friends will pay handsomely for the things, therefore she shall have them. Perhaps, by establishing her identity, she will inherit vast estates—perhaps these very estates will revert to Padilla and *his* heirs if the lady fail in her endeavors. Ha! this must be the cause of his anxiety. Now which of them will pay the most for the service, *that's* the question. Padilla lays claim to the girl as being his slave—while she must have these evidences to prove her identity and his roguery. The stake is a heavy one, and a fearful one to them both. If the lady wins, Padilla must fly to save himself. If *he* wins, Lucretia's lost. Stop! I don't know that either. This House of Louis Bremont & Co., in Pearl street (Rachael wrote this down with a pencil) is of vast wealth and high standing, and with such friends to sustain her, this Lucretia must sooner or later defeat the Spaniard. I *think* I'll play for the damsel."

Thus saying, he carefully replaced the things and closed the box, opened the door of his false bookcase and conveyed the box to the little room whence he had observed Rachael. Being fully satisfied with himself, and remembering his promised interview

with Bremont, Rankin and Company at ten in the morning, and with Rachael at some later hour in the day, he retired to rest and gathered strength from sleep to sustain him in the several characters he was to assume on the morrow. Rachael also being satisfied with her discovery, fastened the secret door and retired to her chamber to think.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ABDUCTION AND THE BURGLARY.

And this was Lucretia's third, and Padilla's second day in New York. The sun rose in the usual place for the season, but no one saw him, for heavy storm-clouds had gathered, threatening a severe storm, which in all probability would be cold rain and hail, judging by the wind (a very intangible basis), which was blowing in squalls from the southeast.

At ten o'clock, Joseph entered the private office of M. Bremont, where he found that gentleman, the Jew, Bill Rankin, and Georgy Nippers, already assembled. In a few words, Joseph related his adventures of the previous evening (not mentioning the infamous lie he had perpetrated on Becky Woods), and how he was in possession of the identical box and articles; and all that was now wanting, was certain settlements of terms (on behalf of the slave, Alice, and church charity, of course), which he had no doubt would be easily adjusted.

Bremont said he would pay the demand without further parley; at which Joseph replied, there were some other terms besides money that he was compelled to impose, which he hoped would not be taken amiss. Alice appeared to have taken a great fancy to the lady Lucretia, and was very desirous of placing, with her own hands, the box in possession of that lady; and then there was a stipulation that Alice was to be fully protected in her present freedom, and that our heroine was to pursue Padilla

through the power of the law, to effectually drive him from the country, and all these arrangements were to be consummated at Joseph's house on the morrow, he being too much engaged on the present day (he thought of Rachael) to devote any more time to the business.

On being questioned by the delighted Bremont as to whether he had the box in a secure place, Joseph told him it was in his private study, adjoining his chamber, and that no person ever entered there except in his presence. Snappy and the Jew exchanged a significant glance, unobserved by the others. Bill could see nothing. He sat like a gaping country bumpkin for the first time weeping over the sorrows of the babes in the wood, as portrayed in the effective drama bearing that title. Poor Bill, the softness of his heart was only equalled by the hardness of his sinews and the purity of his courage.

The conference ended after appointing two o'clock next day as the hour for final settlements. The Jew and his two friends, Snappy and Rankin, went off together, until they reached a beer shop, not far away, where they regaled themselves, and settled a little private business of their own, as follows :

The Jew was commanded to avoid Padilla that day if possible, but if a meeting should take place, he was entirely to deceive the Spaniard as to the result of the morning's work, and all this under pain of instant death should he falter or prove false. The ale the wretch was swallowing nearly choked him as he listened to the penalty for disobedience. He swore he would be honest to his masters, then started off alone for his den, as he thought. But Snappy had so filled the mind of Bill with the idea of Aminadab's treachery, that they resolved to watch him every moment of the time until the prize should be fully in the possession of the Lucretia party.

Mr. Georgy Nippers was worthy of his name. His judgment in the premises was perfectly sound, as the result will prove.

Aminadab had not been housed more than ten minutes ere Padilla was seen staggering around the corner of Orange street, disguised as a common sailor, and after examining a pea-jacket that hung at the door of the shop, as much like a drunken sailor as possible, he staggered into the bazaar of his friend, confederate, and slave, Aminadab Florence, Esq.

"Is there any back way to git out?" said Bill to his friend.

"None," said Snappy, who knew the premises almost as well as the Jew himself; "not a single way. We have him on the hip, and can finish him on the spot, if you say so, Bill."

"No, no," said Mr. Jones, "that won't do till I git regler orders. You see, Snappy, I couldn't lie to *her*, and when she heerd the truth, there'd be an end to me forever, and I do think I should die right out if she was to discharge me."

"Well, perhaps you are right, Bill. But it *does* strike me, the sooner them two rats is out of the way, your lady will be out of trouble soonest."

"That's a fact, Snappy; but you see she's got a mortal horror of seeing old Piddilly's life taken without it's done all regler by the law, you know. So let's keep a sharp look-out, and when he's gone, me and you will pitch in on the Jew, and force him to confess all that passes betwixt 'em."

Such being the settled conclusion of the friends, they retained their place of concealment until Padilla left the shop, which event occurred about forty minutes after he had entered it, carrying away a small bundle of something, as if he had been making a purchase.

As soon as Padilla was well out of sight, Bill and Snappy bore down upon the three gilt balls with all sail set, that the piratical commodore of the "Old Clo" frigate might not have too much time to hatch his lies and evasions for their discomfiture. On entering the shop-door, the Jew fixed his eyes on them in perfect despair. These were the real inquisitors of tor-

ture. He could not hate these, but he really feared them. He had felt "Mishter Shones's" fingers on his stomach and ribs, and he dreaded their coming in contact with his windpipe more than he did a hempen cord.

"Valk in de back room, shentlemens," said Aminadab, with his most humble bow; "valk in, I peg, dat we may shay vot you pleeshe and nopody to hear."

"Why, you infernal old body-snatcher," said Bill, in one of his savage moods, "didn't you promise not to meet Drowsy Peter to-day?"

"Yesh, Misther Shones, I did; but how could I help it? Didn't he come, jist vile I vished him at de devilsh? Vot could I do, dear Misther Shones?" and he clasped his hands in agony, imploring his dear friend not to strangle him on the spot.

"I tell you what you can do," said Bill. "Set down there, my jolly joker, and tell us every word that Spanish thief said. D'ye hear? and if you don't make a clean breast of it, I'll drag you up to the police-office before you can say *jolly miller* onst. D'ye hear, old Nebberconnezzer? Keep your top eye open, or I'll make you meat for grubs in less time than you can pick a pocket; so, look out, that's all!"

Aminadab *shook in his shoes* from the effect of Bill's oratory, and he swore by all the Christian saints he would tell everything. Snappy objected to the oath on the ground of Aminadab's disbelief of those personages, and insisted that he should swear by the beard of Abraham, or the rod of Aaron. Bill said he did not know any of the parties referred to, and declared that Aminadab should swear by *Lucretia*, because he knew who she was, and it was certain death to break even a promise made in her name. And in accordance with the wishes of "*Misther Shones*," Aminadab took the required oath, and to this effect delivered himself of the required information.

Padilla had called to learn all that had transpired in the counting-house of M. Bremont in the morning, and Aminadab had told him all the truth under force of threats. Padilla had then demanded that Aminadab should that very night enter the dwelling of Joseph Cheathim, and steal the box for him under pain of instant exposure. The Jew had sworn to obey Padilla to save his neck in that quarter, and was now prepared to oblige "*Mishter Shnappy*" and "*Mishter Shones*" by betraying his absent employer, to save himself from the grasp of "*Mishter Shones.*"

"Well, you abomination of a rangatang!" said Bill, "don't you deserve to be kidnied for your double rascality? Now listen to me. You *shall* steal the box this night, and place it in my hands."

"To pe sure I vill, dear Mishter Shones. Vare shall I pring it to you?"

"I will be there with Snappy to take it from you the minnet you have it in your fist."

"Oh, don't come!" said the Jew; "he vill pe there—he vill pe there. Oh, Abraham, I am losht—de shervant of de Lord ish losht." And he wrung his hands and tore his hair with anguish. His tormentors were inexorable. If they did not find him fully prepared for the burglary at Cheathim's house when the hall clock struck twelve, they would drag him to death in an instant.

In order that the reader may not think it strange that Bill and Snappy should insist on the robbery of the box by Aminadab, when it was promised to them on the morrow, he must know it was an idea of Georgy Nippers to turn the affair in such a manner as to secure both Padilla and the Jew in the hands of justice, for the burglary, at least, leaving it to chance to fix crimes of a blacker character on the Spaniard. Again, Snappy was fully impressed that the minister was a scoundrel. He could not disclose any one particular fact to justify this opinion; he had seen many

signs of villainy and double-dealing in the face of Joseph during their several interviews, and he *felt*, that notwithstanding Joseph's promise to surrender the property on the morrow, his promise had no foundation in sincerity.

"Why didn't he git the box at onst," said Georgy to Bill, "when Mister Bremont offered to cum doun so hansum on the nail? I'll tell you wot it is, Bill; that chap is jist waiten to see if Piddilly won't do somethin better in the way of chink."

Bill had the utmost confidence in Snappy's judgment, and answered his proposition with—

"Sure enough!—why didn't he?"

And for these reasons they had resolved on the course of conduct they had just pursued with Aminadab. When they were about leaving him, Snappy said that he or Bill would be on the watch for him from that moment until he started for Cheathim's house, and if he was seen to even meet Padilla again before the burglary, the most wretched and instant death awaited him. Then they went away, leaving Aminadab to the enjoyment of his own reflections without further interruption.

It was noon when they left the Jew, and retired to Bill's lodgings to talk the matter over. They resolved not to tell Mr. Bremont or Lucretia anything about the matter. Bill then produced his pistols to prepare them for the night's service. Snappy objected to the "weepin," as being very liable to make a great noise, and to do little good in a dark, rainy night (the gathering storm had already burst with all the fury of a New York February southeast wind, hurling rain and hail to the earth and freezing it there the instant it touched). Bill inquired whether they were to go unarmed, to which Snappy said, "No;" and pulling from his inside coat pocket a pair of very awful-looking slungshots, handed one to his companion, saying:

"Them is the tools that never misses fire, and don't make no noise neether."

Rankin smiled as he examined the "tool," then tapping Georgy, in the most amiable manner, on his cheek, said:

"Snappy, my boy, you take 'em both; for if we must operate without powder and steel, I've got a pair of slungshots hanging from my shoulders heavy enough to smash any head that shows itself in Waverley Place this blessed night."

Everything being settled to their satisfaction, little Rosalie was summoned to set out a lunch of biscuit, Bologna sausages, cheese and butter, with a bowl of white sugar, two spoons, a lemon and a kettle of hot water. Bill had laid in all such articles of comfort on the morning after he had occupied his lodgings, well knowing that he would in all probability be sooner or later compelled to do garrison duty. When the table was spread (a service performed by Bill and his little favorite), and all the things brought, he produced a large plum cake, as a present for "Rosy," telling her, that as they would have business that might keep them out all night, they were going to take a nap after lunch, and desired her to awaken them at six o'clock precisely. In a few moments two glasses of hot whisky punch adorned the board, and these knights of modern chivalry fell to, with an energy that promised any amount of stamina for the approaching "*coup de Snapp.*"

Joseph failed to visit Rachael, as he had been commanded, but had sent a letter promising the interview on the following day. M. Bremont had fully informed Lucretia of all that had transpired relative to her business. Messrs. Gilbert Hays and Alexander Jackson were on the look-out for Padilla. The rain was falling with considerable violence, and it was just half-past five o'clock P.M., as a fine hackney coach drove up to the door of Louis Bremont's mansion, and a man who was seated beside the driver jumped to the ground and pulled the door bell with violence. The door was opened, the man stepped into the hall, unbottoned his overcoat, took a letter from his pocket, and said to the servant:

"Please hand that to the lady it is sent to." The servant disappeared and returned in a few moments, saying to the man:

"The lady will be ready in a moment." And in an incredible short time, Lucretia, accompanied by two of the Misses Bremont, appeared in the hall. They cautioned Lucretia to wrap herself up well and not get wet, and in another instant she was seated in the close coach, which flew from the door of the mansion with all the rapidity that two splendid horses could give it.

At seven o'clock M. Bremont returned home in a hack. His return was watched for by the young ladies, who were anxious to learn what success this day had brought to the good cause. The hall door flew open and M. Bremont, *alone*, rushed in out of the rain.

"Where did you leave Lucretia, pa?" said the eldest Miss Bremont, seeing the coach drive off.

"Where did I leave her?" said Bremont, echoing the question of his daughter in some astonishment, "why, I left her here when I went out."

"But you sent a note and a coach for her," said the young lady in reply.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Bremont, as he tottered to a seat in the broad lighted hall, "what do you mean, my daughter?"

"Oh, father! father!" said Clarisse, "Lucretia is lost forever!"

In an instant the household was in the wildest commotion. The note was produced, and pronounced a forgery by M. Bremont. Lucretia had been abducted, Padilla alone could be guilty. Orders were sent for the home coach, and while the young ladies—all of whom were devoted to our heroine, even on the short acquaintance between them, were crowding together, terror depicted on their faces and tears streaming from their eyes, the trembling Bremont armed himself, ordered his old footman

to follow him, entered the coach, and drove at once to McDougal street, where Bill lodged.

Rosalie told him that Mr. Jones had gone out with his friend at six o'clock, and said he would be out all night. Bremont told Rosalie to send Bill to his house as soon as he came in, then leaping into his coach drove to the Police Office in the Park; encountered Hays and Jackson, and told them of the abduction.

There was a magistrate present, and Bremont made an affidavit on the instant, charging Padilla with the abduction. An advertisement was written, offering five thousand dollars reward for the recovery of the lady, and arrest of the perpetrator of the crime.

A warrant issued, and the élite of the New York police sallied forth in the gale, to try their skill at a pursuit without any other information than that a coach came for her, and the forged letter, which Bremont placed in the hands of Officer Hays.

"Can't you give us some clue to this Padilla," said that officer, in his low, soft voice, while his proud lips were slightly compressed and his piercing black eyes were fixed on the distracted face of Bremont. "Do you know any one who knows him beside the two men I have seen in your counting-house?"

"Yes," said Bremont, with sudden energy, "the Jew pawnbroker is suspected by Mr. Jones, and his friend Snapp, of having met Padilla in the shop of the former."

"Old Florence, hey! That's the man," said Hays. "Aleck, clap on your watertights and we'll beat up the thief's quarters."

This last remark was addressed to Alexander Jackson, and in less than five minutes they were on the way to the Five Points, having promised to bring the earliest intelligence of importance to M. Bremont, without regard to time of day or night. Bremont then drove home in a state of excitement not describable.

In the meantime, while all these efforts were being made in her behalf, Lucretia had been driven about seven miles out of town,

on the old Bloomingdale Road, where the coach turned into a narrow, untravelled lane extending to the North River. Presently the coach stopped, and voices were heard—a gate was opened and the coach went on again for a short time, stopped, the door was opened, three men and one woman appeared with a lantern, and carried her into the house. The men then departed with the coach, and she was alone with the woman.

We have said she was *carried* into the house. It is true. The poor girl was completely crushed by momentary despair, and passive as a child. In a short time, however, Lucretia recovered sufficiently to inquire where she was, and by whom or whose orders she had been abducted. The woman spoke in pure Castilian, and said:

"You have nothing to fear, lady. No violence of any description will be offered to you, if—if" ——

"If what?" said Lucretia, rapidly recovering her senses. "Is it no violence to be thus basely forced from my friends, and immured, I know not whither, nor for what purpose? Speak to me, madam, and tell me this outrage has been committed through error."

Lucretia spoke in English. The attendant, who was no other than Beatrice, the creature of Padilla, the same at whose house in Cherry street he lodged, smiled, and in perfectly good English replied:

"Madam, you are Spanish, like myself. Why do you not speak your native language with your country-woman?"

"You elude my purpose. I am in no mood for badinage. Tell me at once where I am, and by whose orders or will I have been thus outraged."

"You are in a very comfortable house, built of red freestone, situated on York Island, between the Bloomingdale Road and the North River, about, as I am informed, seven miles from the City Hall. You are *where* you are by the will of Don Pedro Nuñez

Padilla. My name is Beatrice, and I am at once your servant, your companion, and your jailer, until Padilla removes either you or me. You will have full liberty to walk in the garden *with me.* All your wants will be supplied; but you must neither see, speak, or write to any one, nor try to escape."

"And if I do?" said Lucretia.

"I must stop you."

"And if you cannot?"

"Then I must kill you."

Lucretia started at this answer. Not that she feared death, but that a woman, evidently of some education and refinement, could treat the subject with so much *sang froid.*

"And is it possible," said Lucretia, "that you, whose appearance and language betoken nothing of necessity or want of any description, can yield yourself a ready instrument in the hand of that villain, and against the life of a woman who has already suffered more wrong from him than a century's time of prayers and tears could wash from his thoroughly corrupted soul?"

"Yes," was the laconic answer, without the movement of a muscle. "But," continued this *strong-minded* woman, "let me show you to a chamber, that you may prepare for supper." Then, taking a lighted lamp from the table, she conducted our heroine to a finely decorated chamber—wanting nothing to complete its furniture—in the upper story of the house.

"This is your chamber," said Beatrice. "Mine is the next one. The dining-room is on the first floor, opposite the room we have this moment left, which is the parlor, where you will find a harp, piano, guitar and books, to wile away the time when you are tired of walking. Will you have supper immediately?"

"I will have a cup of tea—nothing more," said Lucretia.

Beatrice retired, and locked the door after her, but soon returned with an old negro man, bearing a small tea-set on a tray, which he placed on the table, and retired without a single word.

Beatrice proceeded to light two lamps that were standing on the mantel, and then demanded if Lucretia required anything more. On being answered in the negative, she said :

"In that armoire you will find articles of attire that will answer your wants for such time as you remain here. Use that bell pull should you want anything in the night."

She retired and locked the door. Lucretia sipped her tea, and gradually fell into what some people call a brown study. She knew with whom she had to deal, and resolved to bear her duress with all the philosophy she was mistress of until his exact intentions were known.

Let us leave her thinking, and turn our eyes to the shop of Aminadab Florence on the Points. The officers of the law entered without ceremony, and inquired for the Jew. The old crone, *Hagar*, said he was out, and had been since four o'clock that afternoon. This confirmed Hays in his suspicion that Aminadab was a party to the abduction. They searched the premises, however, to satisfy themselves that the fox was not in his lair, and then consulted on the probability of his return, resolving to await that event to insure his speedy arrest.

The night was advancing rapidly, and the storm was raging with renewed violence. Eleven o'clock struck, yet no Aminadab came. Resolved to leave no stratagem untried to lure the Jew to his lair, old Hagar, who knew the officers perfectly well, was ordered to close the front shop, and put out all the lights, except those in the little back room. A very ancient looking clock, that adorned the wall over the fire-place in the little room, struck half-past eleven, which aroused the still listening officers, and suggested to Mr. Jackson the few first stanzas of a rather obsolete bravura, entitled, *Why, why, why comes he not?*—but he did not come. At length the heavy, booming chime of the Hall bell announced the hour of midnight, bringing the officers to the conclusion that Aminadab *would not come home till morning*, and rousing little

Conklin Titus—the veritable Quasimodo of the City Hall—from a gentle snooze he had fallen into while looking out for fires from his lofty watch-tower.

The same chiming of the hour roused several other parties to action in another section of the city, whither the reader must follow me through the storm. The last stroke of twelve was scarcely lost to the ear, when Rachael Hawthorne rose from her uneasy couch, in the same chamber where her idiotic husband lay in heavy slumber. Robing herself for stern and sudden action, arming herself with an effective pistol, and accompanied by a small, brilliant lantern, she entered the secret passage leading to Joseph's apartments.

Outside the mansion, our old acquaintance, Aminadab Florence, effectually armed against the storm, a small bag slung over his shoulders, containing all the necessary tools for *cracking a crib*, a coil of well-tried half-inch hemp line, with an iron claw at one end, and an immense walking-stick in his hand, was leaning against one of the stone columns that ornamented the main entrance of the mansion.

The clock had no sooner given its last stroke in honor of the *cheat of human bliss*, than Aminadab's walking-cane was stretched out, joint by joint, until it assumed the appearance of a rod for heavy fishing; but it was of sterner stuff than fishing-rods are made of. He then fixed the claw end of his line to his rod, and with great dexterity fastened the claw to the inner railing of the balcony of the house. The other end of the line was then fastened to the ornamental railing of the steps below. Then with his bag of tools hanging under his left arm, and with the agility of a monkey, he ascended to the balcony, and his tools were instantly in requisition.

Now, we must look inside again. Rachel entered *that* particular room stealthily, her pistol in one hand, her lantern in the other. She paused and listened attentively. Joseph was sleep-

ing as soundly as a child wearied by play, his night lamp casting a heavy dull light on the furniture of the rooms. She opened the book-case noiselessly, and entered the secret room or closet in the rear, seized the box in which Lucretia's evidences were, and regained the mirror door without arousing Joseph from his sleep. But just as she was entering the secret passage, she was startled by a low, singular noise in the direction of the front windows. Listening attentively, she distinctly heard the chipping of Aminadab's auger boring off the fastenings of the outside blinds. Conceiving at once that the house was being entered by robbers, she hastily placed her lantern and the box in the passage, and drawing the mirror door almost close shut, stood waiting the result, with her pistol ready for action. It was no part of her designs that Joseph should be killed; she had armed herself simply to enforce, if necessary, the possession of that box. Rachael was a new woman. The dreadful effect of her heartlessness upon her husband had entirely changed her. From *that* moment, she had devoted herself to the eternal care and companionship of her injured husband, and to acts of holy charity and goodness, that had been strangers to her bosom until the spirit of pure repentance settled in her heart. And she stood there waiting the result.

It was not long before the skillful engineer on the outside removed the fragile barrier that opposed his entrance to the citadel. The blind opened, the sash rose slowly, without noise, and Aminadab, in company with a column of cold, damp air, entered the apartment of the unconscious Joseph.

He had only time to cast his eyes about once, before Rachael thought it time to interfere, by rousing Joseph from his slumbers, and leave him to deal with the thief; with this view she discharged her pistol in the room, closed the secret passage, and made the best of her way back to her own apartment in safety with the box.

As may readily be supposed, the report of a goodly Derringer

in a large room, brought Joseph to his feet and Aminadab back to the window. An instant disclosed to Joseph the true state of the case. With a cudgel in his hand he pursued the burglar, who dexterously threw himself over the rail of the balcony, and commenced descending by his rope. At that instant three men came rushing to the spot—two from one direction, and one from the other.

"Give me the box!" said a voice that belonged to Georgy Nippers; when at that instant three very startling incidents occurred—viz., Bill Rankin received a severe blow across his mouth, from a heavy weapon in the hand of some invisible being; the Jew lost his hold on the rope, and fell with a dreadful crash to the ice-coated flagstones; and a watchman gave the alarm rap with his club at the very next corner.

"Come!" said Snappy, pulling Bill by the arm, and they were soon out of danger.

"Help me!" moaned Aminadab, as the watchman came to the spot and raised him from the ground.

"Bring him into the hall," said Joseph, as he opened the street door, being followed by all the servants, half dressed and three-quarters dead with fright, each one with a light in hand.

The watchman carried Aminadab into the hall, for the poor wretch was so bruised about the hips he could not stand. He groaned dreadfully, called on his ancestors, Abraham and Moses, to save him, while he poured out all his wrath upon the head of Padilla, who, he said, was the cause of all his misery.

The coach was immediately ordered (to the great disgust of the coachman), and preparations made to convey the Jew to the police office; and then Joseph, happening to cast his eye on the filthy condition of the Jew—who was bleeding freely from a severe cut in the head—and the dripping condition of the watchman, thought of the costly lining of his coach, and how much it would cost to restore it after such a freight, countermanded his

order to the great *delight* of the coachman, who had no desire of turning out on such a night; but his joy was short lived. The order for *his* coach was no sooner countermanded than an order to bring a hack from the stable, in McDougal street, was issued; whereupon the unhappy Jehu was forced into the inclement night, without even the company of his horses.

On being questioned, Aminadab would give no satisfactory answer, but whined most piteously for the misadventure of the night, alternately cursing himself and those who set him on.

Presently the hack arrived at the door, the Jew and the watchman were placed on the front seat, while Joseph, in the new character of just prosecutor, occupied the other; the coach moved rapidly toward the police station in the Park, where they arrived half an hour later than Messrs. Hays and Jackson, on their return from the pawnbroker's shop.

Joseph was the first to enter the office, and request that assistance might be sent to bring in the burglar. A couple of stout watchmen went out, and in a few moments returned with Aminadab in their arms, he having fainted from loss of blood and pain. The two policemen no sooner saw the prisoner than it was clear to their minds that he was also the abductor of Lucretia, which fact they had the honor of communicating to Joseph, who, to that moment, was profoundly ignorant of the feats of the night, except the one in which he had taken a part.

A formal complaint was lodged against the Jew for burglary, and Joseph was dismissed with an injunction to appear at ten next morning, to give his testimony on the preliminary examination. A physician was called in to look after the wounded Aminadab, and every attention afforded to resuscitate him and relieve his pain.

When Bill and Snappy left the scene of action, they steered their course directly for the lodgings in McDougal street, where,

having arrived, Bill had time to examine his damaged trumpet. He found one tooth gone (the first double tooth), his lips pretty severely cut, and his blood frozen in streaks upon his glistening overcoat.

The wound was dressed by Snappy, who sought to alleviate the pain his companion suffered by throwing into his conversation an occasional verse of curses on the stupidity of the Jew, and the bad conscience of the minister, which prevented his sleeping sound enough for the purposes of Aminadab's crusade; for he and Bill never doubted that the pistol they had heard discharged, and which had produced the catastrophe they had seen, was discharged by the minister himself.

The invisible operator on the mouth of Mr. Rankin was, of course, Padilla. *He* was the single party who rushed up to receive the box from Aminadab when the report of the pistol was heard. He saw nothing of Rankin and Snappy until he was upon them, and heard the voice of Snappy calling for the box; then finding himself in close proximity with two men whom he could not recognize in the pitch-dark storm, and believing them to be about arresting both the Jew and himself, had drawn forth a loaded bludgeon, and struck the nearest one in the face. He would doubtless have followed up the blow, if the watchman's alarm-rap at that instant had not forced him to abandon the adventure and find safety in flight.

He retired moodily to his lodgings in Cherry street, having accomplished only one-half of his allotted day's work, to wit: the abduction of Lucretia—the box of valuables being yet on the waters of destiny.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PENITNET AND THE PRISONER.

On the following morning the sun arose in all his splendo Not a cloud was to be seen. The wind had shifted to the sout west, and was gently blowing from that quarter with all t softness of the first breath of spring.

William Rankin, Esq., having been duly informed of M. Br mont's visit on the previous night, hastened to dress himself f the purpose of paying his devoirs even before breakfast. It mu be confessed his face, in the immediate vicinity of his mouth, pr sented a rather rough appearance, but tying a white handkerchief, folded broad, around his damaged visage, and resolving to tell the truth about the matter to his mistress, he went forth, instructing his friend to await his return, when they would proceed to breakfast together.

He reached Bremont's house just as that gentleman was going forth. The instant their eyes met, the faithful Rankin saw that something had gone wrong.

"Come in, Rankin," said Bremont, "I have something to tell you that will freeze up your blood."

They entered the house, Bremont leading the way to a small room which he called his study. Being seated, he related to Rankin all the particulars of the abduction, adding that the Jew pawnbroker was strongly suspected of being a party concerned in the villainous transaction. Contrary to Bremont's expectations,

Rankin listened to the story without a single start or word, and when the relation ended, he dropped his face into his vast hands, and wept like a very child.

Bremont did not disturb him, but with a heart bursting with grief, sat regarding the uncultured gladiator enviously, that *his* grief *could* find relief in tears. It was some time ere Rankin showed any other signs of life than an occasional irrepressible sob or a nervous tremor running through his herculean frame. At length he mastered his emotions, and rising from his seat, standing erect, he raised his right hand solemnly, and said:

"Here, by that almighty God that *she* teached me to love and pray to, I solemnly swear to kill Piddilly the first time I git within reach of his cussed body. He is guilty, and no one but him. Don't say nothin' to me now, Mister Brumont; I have took my oath, and if I don't keep it, I'm damned! That's all!"

It was a fearful thing to listen to, that strong man's oath. It was not spoken with vehemence—no rage marked his features at its utterance; but it came quietly from the singleness of his nature, sent forth by a just appreciation of the horrid wrongs his dear mistress had suffered by Padilla, and justified by the innate sense of right and wrong, and the justice of prompt punishment, which made a part of his unpolished nature.

M. Bremont trembled at the calm earnestness of the worthy Rankin, whose sincerity was not to be doubted. He was in earnest, and the French merchant knew it; therefore he became anxious to divert Bill's attention from his fierce design by leading his thoughts in a more important direction—the recovery of Lucretia.

"Let us think of nothing until Lucretia be found," said Bremont; "then it will be full time to think of punishing her betrayer."

"Found! to be sure, I'll find her; but O Lord, let me find

him!" said Bill, tearing the handkerchief from his battered face grinding his teeth, in a paroxysm of fury that was terrible to

"Why, Rankin! what has happened to you?—how wer so bruised?"

"It aint nothin, sir," said Bill—"that is, nothin of any '(It's only another reason why I should kill that blasted Sp the next time I git hold of him, that's all."

And then he told the adventure of the last night, conc nothing. This more firmly impressed M. Bremont with th that Aminadab knew something of the abduction, and he re to visit the police office immediately after breakfast, warnin not to appear there, lest the spite of the Jew should involv in trouble. He also told Bill he had offered a large rewa the recovery of his mistress, and that the entire police forc been notified last night, and were in hot chase of the vill every direction. Rankin then resolved to hunt on his own in company with Snappy, whose genius he had no doubt soon discover the place of his dear lady's concealment, pro to call at least twice a day, to bring and receive inforn And then he took his leave.

On reaching his lodgings, Rankin flung himself into a dropping his head upon his chest, his hands hanging dead side. The expression of his face was hardly describable; a mixture of hope, affection and revenge, heavily shade leaden despair. Snappy, who was enjoying a whiff from pipe as Bill entered, was alarmed by the appearance of his and casting his pipe in the fire, taking one of Bill's hands own, said, with no little nervousness:

"Whot *ails* you, my pet? Whot in the name of thund come acrost you, Willey, to make you look so? Speak man! Come, don't hang your head for this one little disa ment. D—n it, Bill, we'll git the box after all. Come speak to me, won't you, old feller?"

Bill raised his eyes to the face of his friend, shook his head mournfully, and said in a voice choked with emotion:

"She's gone, Georgy—gone forever!"

"Gone?—who's gone?" said Snappy, with more agitation than he was in the habit of exhibiting.

"She—Madam Lucretia," said Bill; and his grief once more overcoming his feelings, he gave way to another flood of grief.

Now, I think I can see some of you strong-minded readers sneer at the crying prize-fighter. You had better save your sneers. One hundred men could not *hammer* a tear into Bill's eye. He was a man, every inch. His courage was only equalled by the genuine truth and tenderness of his heart. While he could calmly endure any amount of corporal punishment from the hands of an enemy, he would shed tears over the sufferings of a child. His disposition was to love everybody. In the beginning of his acquaintance with Lucretia, she had touched his heart as it had never been touched before; and from that hour he had grown stronger and more intense in his admiration and veneration for his idol mistress. His whole existence had been wound up in the pursuit of her happiness. The height of his ambition was to be the humble instrument through whom she was to succeed in her present undertaking. He fully understood her position in the world, as to her birth and parentage, and although he knew nothing of a parent's tenderness to a child, or of a child's transports when receiving a parent's caress, from experience, he had an intuitive forecast of the rapture such a condition of existence would awaken in the bosom of his angel mistress. And then, in the very moment of success to have all his hopes crushed at a blow by the loss of her for whom he was so willing to lose himself, was more than he could at once endure. He was forced to weep, and he wept.

Snappy did not disturb him, but left the room softly and sent in little Rosalie, who he knew was a great favorite of his friend,

having told the girl to cheer Bill up, and assure him he would find his mistress soon.

The little sprite entered upon the task at once, with all the winning tenderness of her gentle nature. She went to Rankin, placed her little hands upon his head gently, told him that was not the way to find his mistress—that he should dry his tears, and think a great deal; and then he should act, and search and travel about, and try and find where they had taken Miss Lucretia. If *she* were a man, and some one had stolen *her* lady away, she wouldn't think of crying till after she had found her again, and *then* she would cry with joy. She was sure every one was sorry for what had happened, but tears would not bring her back. If she knew Miss Lucretia, she would go out herself into the country, all around the city, and she would be sure to find her after a little while.

"Well, there!" said Snappy, when Rosalie finished her first attack upon her couchant Hercules, "if you aint *one* of 'em, Rosy, there never *was* any of 'em at all. Why, you little sugar-plum, you're a reg'lur trump—you are. Jist see here, Bill, the little 'un's got more sense then me and you both put together. Sure enough, why *don't* we go out and search about the country? Her hiden-place must soon be found out, and then let old *Don Smashed Nob* stand clear out of the way; for if I don't flatten a half pound shot on his head or send it clean through his skull, I'm not a mortal sinner."

While Georgy was speaking, Rosalie was caressing Bill and whispering in his ear. He got his head up, brushed the water from his eyes and face—not because he was ashamed of it—and starting to his feet, declared he would never give up the pursuit while he could stand upon his pins.

"That's right," said Rosy, "and now I know you'll find her. Won't you let me see her when she comes back?"

And she looked up in Bill's face so sweetly, her soft, blue eyes

swimming with tears for his affliction, that he raised her in his arms as a mother would hold her infant, his eyes beaming with the most grateful tenderness, and said :

"Yes ! my darling little Rosy, you shall see her and she shall love you too, for your courage and goodness ; and mind ! I'll bring you the biggest plum cake I can find, to boot."

Then pressing the child to his vast bosom, he placed her on the sofa, seized his cap, overcoat and cudgel and rushed into the street followed by Snappy, who, giving his head two or three sharp jerks to settle his cap in its proper position on his head, and, a knowing wink to Rosy, which said quite as plainly as lips could frame the language, *we're after her now, for certain*, was at his companions side in a moment.

Rosalie watched them from the door till they turned the corner, then running to her mother who was busy in the back basement, told her all that had happened and how Mr. Jones was most crazy about the lady's loss. This foolish woman turned very pale while Rosalie was speaking, then drawing her child close to her bosom, began to weep on her little curly head.

"What's the matter, ma ?—do you cry because you are sorry for the poor lady ?"

"Yes, yes, my dear Rosalie, I *am* very sorry for Mr. Jones and for the lady too ; but suppose some bad man were to steal you away from me ?—I should die, I know I should."

And she hugged her darling still closer and tighter, as if the ruffian of her ridiculous imagination were really rushing upon her that moment.

"Why, ma !"—said Rosalie, patting her mother's cheek gently, with both her hands, "I am no beautiful great lady—nobody would ever think of stealing me. Besides, do you think Brother Harry would let any one run away with his little sister ? I guess not, while he can fight so."

"Oh, you foolish little dear," said the simple mother, scattering

kisses all over the snowy, glittering brow of her daughter, "you are beautiful enough to tempt a great many bad men."

"Why, ma! how you do talk to-day. Only a week ago, when you heard the French gentleman, who lives around by the Parade Ground, call me a beautiful little girl, you told me I was not beautiful, that the men only said so to make me vain, and that I must always stop people from calling me handsome; and *now you* call me beautiful."

And the little sylph cocked her curly head to one side and looked in her mother's face with such an expression of affectionate reproof for saying the very thing she had forbidden her to listen to from any other, that Mrs. Summerville absolutely blushed.

Kissing Rosalie again by way of a compromise, Mrs. Summerville told her to lock the front door and go upstairs to her lessons if she wished to be able to fill the position of a true lady. The girl returned the salute fondly, and hastened merrily away, leaving the mother gazing upon her retreating form and listening to her musical laughter with all that intense love such mothers are weak enough to revel in.

Ten o'clock that morning found M. Bremont in the magistrate's office as a witness against Aminadab. In a short time, the Reverend Joseph Cheathim made his appearance for the same purpose. Presently, Gilbert Hays entered, and going to the bench, whispered something to the judge, who in his turn said:

"Very well, let him come upon the stand."

The next moment a grave-looking subject in black, except shirt-bosom, collar and cravat, which rivalled the snow in whiteness, came forward, and the oath was duly administered to him. He stated that the Jew was too much in danger of losing his life, from the effects of his fall on the previous night, to undergo a removal from his bed. The court then ruled the examination should be deferred until that day week, and the witnesses were

dismissed with an injunction to be present on that occasion without any further notice.

Mr. Hays and M. Bremont then conferred privately for a few moments, when the former gentleman left the court-room suddenly. Mr. Cheathim then ranged up alongside of Bremont, and with one of his most charitable looks fixed upon his face, said :

"My dear M. Bremont, what a fortunate thing it was the thief did not have time to find the box and papers before I awoke. Indeed, sir, I think the premature discharge of the villain's pistol was a divine interposition in the cause of justice and humanity. I am deeply pained on learning the abduction of your protégée, but what surprises me most, is the perfect dissimulation of this Israelitish vagabond, by which we have all been deceived. He surely must have been in the employment of the Spaniard, from the beginning."

M. Bremont was very inattentive to what the divine was saying, for his thoughts were engrossed by the very uncertain fate of Lucretia ; but recovering himself, he said :

"Sir, I believe that if the box had been lost with the lady, I should have become mad—completely mad. As the matter now stands, I am not without the strongest hopes of recovering the lady, since it is not her life that is sought after. All the avenues from the city are guarded and watched, and the most expert officers of the department were placed in quick pursuit of the fugitive. God help them in their task ; for if they fail, a hundred hearts will crumble into ashes."

Now, Joseph, who no longer had a double game to play, Padilla being considered a beaten man, from the necessity of keeping out of the claws of justice, for his last act of infamy (no one doubted his guilt), began to think of securing the rich merchant as the most proper person to whom, as the lady's friend, he could safely surrender his charge. He therefore, resolved to put in a home thrust to secure his position without further delay.

"I regret exceedingly that the melancholy occasion of last night prevents the fulfillment of all my desires in making a restoration of the property, so long and so basely withheld from its rightful owner; yet believe me, sir, if an immediate surrender of my trust into your hands will afford you any satisfaction in your present suffering condition, it shall be made as soon as we can reach my house."

"I am truly grateful, sir, for this fresh mark of your delicacy and attention. I accept your offer, sir, and will make it my especial study to answer the obligation you place me under, in the most ample and satisfactory manner. Come, sir, I will attend you without further delay."

And in a few moments they were moving rapidly toward the clerical mansion in Waverley Place.

When they arrived, Joseph conducted Bremont to the poverty chamber again, and requested him to be seated until his return. Then hastening upstairs, he made for his secret closet; but what pen can describe his mortification when he discovered the box had been stolen. He knew in an instant that Rachael had been there, she being the only one to whom the recess was known. But how she had obtained any knowledge of the box, was a perfect mystery to him. It was impossible for him to leave Bremont waiting below until he could find Rachael; and even if he did find her, there was every probability that he would get a box of a very different description to that he was searching for.

Then another difficulty arose. How was he to explain the disappointment of the dressing-case. Would he not be suspected of double dealing, and lose character for honor and honesty, with the very man he was so anxious to secure as a friend.

These thoughts crowded upon him so rapidly, and became so troublesome, that he was at a loss to frame an apology for the mysterious disappearance of the box, the loss of which was so likely to involve him in the most unpleasant dilemma. However, on

reflection, he concluded it was very probable Rachael would at once restore the case, on being informed of its true destination and value; and that it would be perfectly safe for him to lie a little to Bremont, until he could gain time to visit his repudiated queen.

Being so resolved, he returned to the poor parlor and told M. Bremont he was deeply mortified for being compelled to crave his indulgence for a couple of hours. The key of his private room was in a secret drawer of his bureau, and the key of *that*, was mislaid, or his private secretary had it, he knew not which; but the secretary had gone to the society chambers, and he would go there immediately himself, in search of the key, at the same time inviting M. Bremont to take a seat in the library and wait his return.

The plausibility of his excuse was perfectly successful; but M. Bremont was anxious to return home, where everything was in confusion from recent events, and declined waiting, telling the minister he would return toward evening, or in the morning for the box. This was playing into the hands of Joseph, who, with his blandest smile, said:

"Oh, sir! I will not give you so much trouble, for I will bring the stolen articles myself in the morning."

Bremont thanked him kindly, and departed; but no sooner was he out of the house than a most fearful change come over Joseph. His face became paler than usual—his lips and brow contracted—he muttered to himself, and, with his hands behind his back, paced violently up and down the room. He thought of the desperate game he was now forced to play to save himself in the opinion of the French merchant, who was a man of too much importance in New York to be trifled with. As he knew nothing of the great reformation that had taken place in the bosom of Rachael, huge drops of sweat burst from his creeping flesh as he thought of the interview he now no longer could

avoid. There was no help for it; he was driven to the wall, and had to fight his way out.

Being resolved, he smoothed his features and pumped up as much sanctity in his face as the occasion seemed to require, and proceeded at once to the drawing-room of Mistress Hawthorne. That lady was not present, but sent a servant to say she would wait upon the reverend gentleman in a few moments; and in a few moments she entered the apartment.

Her face was calm, wearing an expression of firmness and dignity slightly tinged with a shade of sorrow. To have seen her then, none would have imagined she could ever have played the wanton, or have conceived a thought capable of bringing the burning blush of shame to the cheek of virtue. She seated herself after a very slight sign of recognition, and Joseph commenced business. And here it may be well to remark, that Joseph's opening was truly the beginning of the end; for his beginning was ended by the time he had spoken half a dozen words; he said:

"Rachael, my sister, I have come"——

"I see," said Rachael, interrupting him quietly but determinedly, "you have come to disgrace yourself and your sacred office by pouring into my ears as many falsehoods as you may consider necessary to carry the point for which you came. I demanded this interview some days since—you represented yourself by letter, deferring the occasion. I waited patiently until time recorded another falsehood against you. To-day you come, but not in answer to my demand. Your treachery and villainy have involved you in trouble that will hasten the ruin which hangs gloomily above your head, and which will one day fall and crush you. Joseph, before I speak of the business that really brings you hither, let me speak of ourselves. I and you have dethroned the reason of a man, as pure in heart and soul as we are base and vile. This *was* our triumph—it *is* our everlasting infamy! Do not fear me, sir. I am not about to repeat the

guilty prayers, promises, and pleasures of the past, but will content me with the future, into the deep bosom of which I look with the calm and resolute hope of the mariner whose fragile bark is stranded, and who turns to God's mercy alone for safety here and salvation hereafter. Thou canting, juggling hypocrite, this language will one day settle on your soul, and make you cry aloud for mercy! I will be brief, for your presence is painful to me."

Joseph considered this a salient point; and having grown bold on the quiet and serene manner of Rachael, said—rather coarsely:

"If my presence be so distasteful to you, give me the box you stole from my private room you discovered on the night I found you eavesdropping in my chamber, and let me begone."

At this ungentlemanly speech, the blood rushed to her face, her eyes flashed, her lips became rigid, her hands twitched nervously, and her splendid form heaved as if stirred with the most violent emotions. Joseph saw the symptoms, and dreaded an eruption that might destroy him; and his coward heart once more retreated into fox. The wolf was of little use to Joseph. The lady continued:

"I have devoted myself to him who has an absolute right to all my care and attention; and if by a life of repentance and humility—doing good to others and preventing evil to the extent of my ability, I can purchase peace for my aching heart on earth, and a firm hope of grace hereafter, my earthly mission will be completed and I will surrender up my life without a murmur. It is not for the weak and guilty like me, to be unforgiving or to take vengeance in their own hands, therefore I forgive you Joseph, as I hope to be forgiven; but I feel compelled, in furtherance of my sincere reformation and repentance, to check you in your mad career of vice: and I have begun to serve you by the infliction of a just chastisement. The box and its contents which came into your possession, doubtless by fraud, has been restored by me to its rightful owner, or rather to her friend Louis Bremont, Esq., this day."

If a thunderbolt had struck Joseph on the *os frontis*, he would scarcely have staggered more than he did at this piece of intelligence. He was completely crushed by Rachael's words. He could not speak. Rage, mortification and shame rushed in upon him with so much force, the guilty wretch could find no words for utterance. The defeat of all his plans for making money out of the affair was nothing to compare to the loss of M. Bremont's confidence and esteem. He felt that Rachael had checkmated him—that the moment he had repudiated her the star of his destiny had commenced to wane. What would he not have given then, for the restoration of Rachael's confidence and attachment. It was too late. His game was ended—his adversary had taken the odd trick, and the stake he had played for was lost to him forever. As he made no effort to speak, Rachael—who had studied the effect her words had wrought upon him—continued thus:

"I see, Joseph, you begin to feel the weight of that humiliating degradation your own baseness has brought upon you; but I would have you think, and remember well, that *my* work is just begun. It will be my constant care to devote all my energies to defeat your bad plans, and unmask your hypocrisy wherever its pestilential influence begins to spread; and if these gentle means have no good effect upon you, I will boldly denounce you to the world."

Joseph started again, his blood-clouded eyes were fixed upon Rachael with a singularly wild expression. His lips moved, but no sound came from them. A spirit sailing through the air, whispered in his ear, *murder;* then he grew pale and sick—a film o'erspreading his sight—his head dropping on his arm, he remained with his face buried and his heart overflowing with terror and despair.

Some moments were thus passed in silence, when Rachael, believing her first lesson had been sufficiently effective, rose from her

seat, and with more mildness than she had previously invested her language with, said :

"Retire, Joseph, and in the silence and loneliness of your chamber, seek for that comfort in your hour of tribulation, which only your insulted God can bestow. As yet the world knows nothing of your unworthiness ; but beware how you disregard the lesson you have this day received ; for rather than see another victim stretched upon the shrine of your villainy, I will blast you forever ?"

When she finished speaking, she passed slowly from the room, leaving the subdued Joseph to the quiet enjoyment of his own thoughts. He soon left the drawing-room and retired to his own chamber as he had been directed, where he seated himself in just about the humor Blifil is supposed to have enjoyed when Alworthy demanded of him the letter his mother had intrusted to his care on her deathbed. Joseph did not pray, he could not. The fire—not of remorse, but of rage and shame, was consuming his bosom, and the waters of repentance refused to flow.

We must now leave Joseph to his reflections, and follow Louis Bremont to his home after leaving the divine. When he entered the hall, one of his daughter's came bounding to him, exclaiming that she had *some* good news for him, though it was not of Lucretia *personally*. She then informed M. Bremont, that a lady of very elegant appearance had called, just after he had gone to the police office in the morning—that she inquired for M. Bremont, and on being told he was absent, had left a curiously inlaid dressing-case and a sealed letter for him, declaring, at the time, the box was the identical one, the lady, Miss Lucretia, was searching for. And that the lady then departed without any further explanation.

M. Bremont immediately opened the box, and found the articles just as they had been described. He then unfolded the letter and for the benefit of his daughters, read it aloud ; it ran as follows :

M. Louis Bremont, Esq:

The object sought to be attained will be received as my excuse for this invasion of your privacy. Chance has made me acquanted with the business you are conducting in behalf of a lady bearing the name of *Lucretia;* chance disclosed to me this dressing-case and contents in the possession of a bad man; determination made me its possessor—no matter by what means—for the purpose of restoring it to its owner. As the guardian of that Lucretia, accept it from a woman who has deeply sinned, but whose heart is now awakened to a true sense of the dreadful past, and firmly fixed in repentant humility, upon a life of virtue and sacred duty.

I did not wish to meet you, and called when I knew you were absent from home. I could not bear to be questioned, and therefore avoided a personal interview. This will require no answer, hence I give you no direction. Avoid the minister whose house was entered by the robber last night; there is ruin in his smile; but do not expose to any mortal this letter. The time for his *public* punishment, must be decided by me alone; and I will remain as silent as the grave if he abandons the way of the transgressor.

When necessary, you will hear from me again; until then, accept my best wishes for yourself and the lady for whom I have been enabled to perform this trifling service. Rachael.

Here was another matter for astonishment for M. Bremont. But one thing in the letter seemed intelligible—the minister was evidently a wolf in sheep's clothing, and Rachael had undoubtedly been one of his victims. He enjoined his daughters to preserve the whole transaction in profound secrecy, leaving time and chance to make further disclosures.

The box was secured safely, and a note dispatched to Rankin's lodgings requesting him to call as soon as he returned home; and the worthy merchant retired to his private study to answer some letters from New Orleans, to reveal to his ancient friend, Leamont Belleville, the recovery of the treasure and the abduction of his darling protégée, Lucretia.

It was a hard task, but he went through it with firmness—throwing in an occasional ray of hope to lighten the pain he knew he was inflicting.

And now we must turn to Padilla in the regular order of events. Disguised so as to defy detection (he wore a false nose), he visited the police office that morning to watch the examination of Aminadab for the burglary, but as you have already seen, the examination was deferred in consequence of the critical situation of the Jew from the effects of his fall.

Being disappointed in that instance, he resolved to visit his beautiful captive; and while the events I have just recorded were passing, he hired a wagon and drove to the house where Lucretia was held a close prisoner by Beatrice. He would not permit any one to drive him, because it might lead to a discovery of his prison-house; he therefore went alone.

As he turned from the main road down the little lane leading by the stone house to the river, he pulled up his horse to a walk, that he might frame some probable story as to his immediate intentions toward Lucretia; but before the groundwork of his lie was laid, he came in full view of the house and saw Lucretia seated at her chamber window, reading with as much unconcern as if she had been in the mansion of Belleville or Bremont.

The window was open—for it was a spring day although February had not yet expired, and as the tired horse neared the gate, he neighed sharply. Lucretia raised her eyes, recognized Padilla through his disguise—regarded him a moment without any apparent emotion, and then continued her reading with the utmost indifference. She was a shade paler than usual, and although she wore no melancholy face, it was a tint graver than before her abduction.

It was not for herself that she felt the slightest uneasiness since the moment she knew herself to be in the power of Padilla—her only fear was for the safety of the evidences of her birth and parentage. The Viscount de Montmorencie was the object of his hatred, but she had never been able to divine how Padilla could possibly make her instrumental in gratifying his revenge on that

French nobleman. The unhappy maiden little thought that *her* Monthemar and Padilla's Montmorencie were one—Montmorencie being the name of his mother and the title he bore previous to the death of his father, Count Henry de Monthemar.

She also felt very sad when she thought of the misery her mysterious disappearance from the world would awaken in the bosoms of the Bellevilles, the Bremonts and her trusty serving-man William Rankin. However, I am not prepared to say she would have been quite so easy, if she had known how long she was destined to remain a prisoner.

Presently she heard heavy footsteps on the stair leading to her chamber—the door was unlocked, and Padilla, divested of his disguise, entered. Closing and locking the door behind him, he advanced into the room, and said :

"Good morning, Lucretia ! the sun not yet having reached his meridian, my salutation is in order." And he seated himself without further ceremony.

Lucretia regarded him quietly for a moment, with neither scorn nor contempt on her lip ; and then resumed her book with the utmost composure. Nettled by her calmness and the total absence of all active irritability or grief, which he naturally supposed his tremendous villainy toward her was well calculated to excite, his savage nature prompted him to provoke her by telling lies relative to his success and her complete discomfiture in their operations against each other. And he thus began to play his part :

"Why, Lucretia, you have learned your part well, when we consider the short time you have had for study. However, I suppose you will become a little peevish when the novelty of your present abode shall have worn off, and the sameness and solitude begin to be tiresome ; *then*, perhaps, you will be glad to have even my society for a few hours, that you may deliver some of those fine melo-dramatic speeches your present silence seems to threaten me with. And then your *friend* Mr. Rankin"——

"What of him?" said Lucretia with a start, "has your villainy reached him, too?"

"Not yet," said Padilla, with a quiet sneer. "Having *you* fast, I shall now devote my attention to that worthy gentleman. Would you like to see him? When I get him you shall be gratified with a sight; and I am not sure I will not permit the faithful creature to tell his mistress precisely what I have reserved for him as a compensation for his valuable services both to you and me."

"Padilla, you fear me, and therefore you hate me. Your fear and hatred both originated in the irreparable wrong you have done me ever since my infancy; but you must be certain that you cannot much longer escape the punishment your many crimes so loudly call for. Even now, while I am speaking, you may have been tracked to this place, from which you may never go alive. (Padilla started, looked about him, then examined his pistols, and Lucretia proceeded.) I am not mistaken. While you bravely come to gratify your savage nature by plaguing me with your hateful presence in my captivity, you tremble lest some one of your despicable creatures has already betrayed you to the officers of the law. If I did not despise you, I could deplore the loss of that vigorous intellect you once possessed, and which would have *laughed to scorn* the idea, that Don Pedro Nuñez Padilla would ever place himself at the mercy of a wretch whom he could buy to be a deputy villain. Why, thou shallow monster! can *you* suppose I do not *know* my friends have offered large rewards for my recovery and your detection? It is true *I* have not seen anything of the kind, simply because the paper-carriers and bill-posters have not *yet* made their appearance in this vicinity; but I have only to close my eyes and give a loose rein to my fancy, and I see at all the public places—on the pumps, in the barrooms, and at every corner of the great metropolis—huge placards headed *Five Thousand Dollars Reward;* and then follows an ac-

curate account of the abduction, a full description of *both* our persons; and then the bill is signed Louis Bremont, whom every one knows is a rich man and an honorable one, who will pay the reward at once when 'tis earned."

Padilla grew very nervous during this speech of Lucretia's, who, noticing the fact, proceeded: "The hackney coachman and his companion have doubtless seen the bills, and are already concocting a plan to get the reward without implicating themselves."

"Ha!" said Padilla, "that's my security. They dare not betray me lest they lose themselves."

"Of course not," said Lucretia, with a meaning smile. "They would not dare to trust some of their companions with the secret, and divide the reward without personal danger."

Padilla could contain himself no longer. The quiet style of Lucretia turned loose a thousand furies in his bosom, and his rage burst forth in hissing curses on Lucretia, Montmorencie, Rankin, black Alice, the Jew, M. Bremont, himself, and mankind generally. He raved up and down the room, tore his hair, stamped upon the unoffending carpet, and blasphemed most horribly, until a certain thought took possession of him, when, stopping in front of Lucretia, fixing his lizard eyes upon her, clenching his teeth and trembling with passion in every limb, he said:

"And, if they *do* find you, it shall be without animation," and he shook his fist in her face, while his lips were covered with froth.

The lady started to her feet in an attitude of proud defiance, and exclaimed with an energy that made the Spaniard jump from her:

"Villain, and liar, you *dare* not execute your threat. The spirit of the murdered Ephigenia, my sainted mother, will protect her injured child. Kill me? base, cowardly trickster, I defy you. Your arm would drop palsied by your side, your very will to murder innocence would stop the throbbing of your callous

heart, and the darkness of death scatter blindness in your wicked way. Begone from my presence, there's poison in the very air when you are by. Begone, I say, and send some new hired ruffian to do the murder you have not the courage to perpetrate. By my faith, the simple story of my wrongs would make that man your enemy, whom gold had bought to do the act of murder you now contemplate. Begone! begone."

Padilla's rage somewhat abated while Lucretia was speaking, and when she had finished he seemed confused and undecided what to say or how to act. After a pause of a few moments, he said:

"I'll leave now, madam, only to secure your *friend*, the traitor Rankin. When you share captivity, I will then determine both your fates."

"You moving mass of falsehood and villainy, you dare not *now* look that generous man in the face. *Now* that I am gone, to meet Rankin is certain death to you. I know his heart—I know his courage, his determination. Beware of him, Padilla, for as certain as death will one day reach you, as certainly will William Rankin be the bearer of the message. I have seen it both by night and day. I see it now! His shadow is ever flitting near with hands outstretched to strangle you."

She pointed menacingly at Padilla as she spoke, who absolutely started and looked about, as if he really felt the dreadful *fives* of the absent hero fastening on his windpipe. Without speaking another word, he left the room, and the house soon after.

It cannot be denied that Lucretia had very sensibly alarmed him. And to heighten his uneasiness, no sooner had he reached the Bloomingdale Road, than at the very first public house he came to, he saw posted up at the door a huge bill, printed in mammoth letters, headed *Five Thousand Dollars Reward!*

The placard was nearly word for word as Lucretia had fancied

it, during her interview with Padilla. There was, inde perfect description of both Lucretia and himself, and of M. Louis Bremont, No. — Pearl street, at the bott Lucretia been the proof-reader, she could hardly hav better detail description of the flaming advertisement th drawn from her fancy.

There were several idle persons reading the bill, and was disguised, he concluded he would pull up as il refreshment, and pick up some little information from ers. He drove his horse under the shed, and enter room, called for some sherry and a cigar, which he li smoked with great vehemence. The bar-keeper was a jolly-looking fellow, and easy of access. Padilla add thus :

"What is all this reward about? Who is the lady stolen?"

"*They* didn't do it," said Boby of the bar. "and when they bring him in, I wouldn't stand in his h best farm on the island."

"Why," said Padilla, "have they discovered who are—have they found the lady?"

"Not quite," said Boby, "but nearly as good. guards at the Bridge (Harlem), and at the Dam (M and at all the ferries and piers around York island. this Piddilly is like a rat in a cage, with only a short t nibble in."

"May he not have passed these bridges on the ni abduction?" said Padilla.

"Not a bit of it. Last night won't be forgotten a you. The bridge-keepers swore that no one passed ou island by that route during the night; and every one k was nairy steamboat, or any other craft, slipt her m that storm. Besides, do you think the feller was gre

to uncage his bird that she might *sing* for help? No, no; the man who was bold enough to make that trick, was smart enough to keep his linnet under the muff."

Now all this had a great tendency to fill the breast of Padilla with vague apprehensions for his own safety. Only a part of his plan had succeeded. He had the person of Lucretia, but he feared the box was lost to him forever. And then he cursed the Jew again, and the evil chance that betrayed the burglar before his attempt was accomplished. Reëntering his wagon, he pursued his way toward the city through the least frequented roads, cudgelling his brain for an expedient to win or destroy the evidences of Lucretia's birth and parentage. I shall leave him so engaged, and finish the day and the chapter in company of the friends at Mistress Summerville's house in McDougal street.

When Bill and Snappy rushed out of the house that morning, it was some time before Georgy Nippers could bring Bill down to any plan of action; but the cool, keen judgment of Mr. Snapp prevailed at last, and the hunt commenced in right good earnest. They visited all the stables in the city, in search of the coach which had been employed—all the ferries and stage-coach offices without success, and in most instances they found the police were in advance of them. Then they visited all the principal dens where thieves, robbers, and ruffians are generally to be hired, and large rewards were offered to numbers of those enterprising citizens for the slightest information; but no information was obtained. And at eight o'clock in the evening, jaded and heart sore, they found themselves once more in Mistress Summerville's little front room on the first floor.

Mrs. Summerville and her two children, Henry and Rosalie, came in to learn the news, but as soon as they saw Bill's face, they knew he had met with no success. Rosalie went up to Rankin, placed her hand on his shoulder, and told him not to be down-hearted, that he would find Miss Lucretia yet all safe.

Bill shook his head mournfully, but said nothing. Then Harry spoke to Snappy, who was seated at a distance from Bill, and inquired if they had been to all the stables. Georgy told him they had done wonders for one day in the way of search, but that no good had come from their labors as yet, although he had strong hopes for the morrow. Supper was speedily prepared, and the whole party seated themselves at the table. Bill could eat nothing, and only took a cup of tea. His spirits were too low to admit of either eating or speaking, and the party felt too kindly toward him to interrupt his deep and silent sorrow.

Snappy, on the contrary, did full justice to the meal. He felt all that a stranger could feel for Lucretia, and all that a true friend could feel for Bill; but he and all the others were strangers to the emotions that filled the bosom of the ci-devant prize-fighter. Snappy gave the wink to Harry and Rosalie, and those three kept up a rambling conversation on the past and passing events, none of them ever for a moment doubting the return of Lucretia to her friends in a few days, if not on the morrow.

These good intentions were lost, however, on the object of their solicitude. Bill heeded them not, but sat, like a man bereft of every sense, till supper was over, when, complaining of a slight headache, he expressed a desire to "*turn in*" and take a little rest, that he might enter upon the chase again on the morrow.

Georgy Nippers concluded to stay all night with Bill, and little Rosalie prepared such things at hand as might be wanted in the night should Rankin really become ill—a circumstance not for a moment doubted by the observing Mrs. Summerville, although she said nothing about it until she was alone with her children upstairs, and then she said :

"Children, Mr. Jones will be a very sick man in the morning, if I am not greatly mistaken. Harry, when my first child died—a darling boy, three years of age, the very picture of you, my

son (and she drew Harry's curly head to her bosom with her left arm, brushing back the soft hair from his bold, intelligent front, and kissing him)—your father was affected just as you saw Mr. Jones this evening for the loss of the lady Lucretia, and grief brought on a fever which laid him on a sick-bed for weeks. Now, my dears, I don't know who or what this Miss Lucretia is, but she certainly has good men and rich men for friends; but I don't believe there is a single one of them who feels the loss of the lady as much as Mr. Jones, who is only her steward or head servant. Mr. Jones has no education, children, but God has given him an honest, generous, and tender heart. You may be sure he is firm in his attachment, and good in all his intentions. Now, my dears, I want you to show Mr. Jones every kindness in your power during his illness; for only think how very dreadful it would be to neglect, in the slightest manner, a poor suffering creature, at the very time, too, when he cannot help himself; and I am sure neither of you would like to make your mother feel she had not done her duty to the suffering stranger, would you?"

The brother and sister looked lovingly in each other's face, then catching their mother around the neck, kissed their answers upon her lips. They did not speak a syllable for a moment—they could not. It seemed as if the very doubt implied by the question had choked their young hearts with grief. Their eyes filled with tears and their bosoms swelled with emotion as the mother pressed them passionately to her bosom.

After a moment's silent enjoyment of that triple embrace, Harry gently released himself, and standing up boldly in front of his mother, said:

"Mother! I am almost fourteen years old, and have never, to my knowledge, passed an entire day out of your society. And did you ever know me to disobey you—tell you a falsehood, or give you pain willfully? And here is Rose (and he flung his arm

about his sister's waist, drawing her to his side), is she not built of nothing but love and goodness? (kiss me, Rose). Then, how *can* you ask us such cruel questions?"

"Cruel! who? I cruel to you? Why, Harry dear, you don't mean that—not cruel, Harry—not for all the world."

"Then, how could you doubt our love, mother?" said Harry.

"I doubt your love? Oh, Harry! my dear boy—my darling son—when you are the very image of your poor father, to doubt your love? I never did, Harry. Did I say so? I am very foolish sometimes, and perhaps say things I don't understand or mean; but, oh, my children, I *do* love you both with all my poor heart and soul?"

"And don't you think we know that?" said Rosalie, with a cunning twitch of the head, that set her curls trembling like thistle-down in a breeze. "To be sure we do; and don't we know that you have got two of the best little babies in the world, for children? to be sure we do, don't we, Harry?"

And the little fairy got back again in her mother's lap and arms, where she was huddled all in a heap by Mrs. Summerville in her foolish ecstasy, to the no small amusement of Harry, who laughed till the tears ran down his checks at the tender confession of his mother, who seemed to be anxious to compromise the affair, by squeezing poor little Rosalie to death from pure love.

After settling all their plans for the comfort and attendance upon Mr. Jones, the happy family parted for the night—Harry going to his own chamber, leaving Rosalie and his mother together, for repose.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EXAMINATION.

The next morning verified the prediction of Mrs. Summerville. William Rankin, *alias* Jones, was confined to his bed by a raging fever. He had made but little complaint during the night, and to all the inquiries of the faithful Snappy, he had but the one answer—it was the pain in his head that made him restless. At daylight, Snappy arose, and proceeded to light a fire in the grate and complete his toilet. By the time he had finished, the sun sent a rich ray of light into the chamber ; and walking to the bed to see if Bill was sleeping—for he had been very quiet during the last hour—he was horrified to behold the gladiator's face and neck of a bright scarlet color, his lips glued together, having foam in either corner of his mouth, and his eyes fixed as if in death.

He bounded to the door and roused the family, all of whom came rushing to the chamber in consternation ; and when they found Snappy bathing the brow and moistening the lips of his friend with cold water, the cause of the alarm was at once discovered. Harry was dispatched for the family physician, Snappy to M. Bremont's, while Mrs. Summerville and Rosalie fell to preparing a hot mustard-bath, and bottles filled with hot water to place at his feet—and a bandage of brown paper saturated in a mixture of vinegar and ammonia encircled the brow of Mr. Rankin before he could say *Jack Robinson*, if he could have spoken at all.

In a short time, Harry reappeared with the doctor, who advanced to the bed-side like a man of business, and subjected Bill to a critical examination, without speaking a word. After having nearly satisfied himself, he turned to Mrs. Summerville—who had been watching the doctor's countenance with the view of gathering some information in that quarter, but without any result—and said, with a low, soft voice:

"Madam! this gentleman is desperately ill. The whole nervous system is overturned and a violent fever has taken such a hold of the head and stomach, that it will require the greatest caution and skill to restore him. He is naturally of a very robust constitution, and of a remarkably sanguine temperament; and comparing these facts with the symptoms of his disease, I have no hesitation in saying, that he has recently met with some dreadful calamity, which alone I judge to be the cause of his prostration. Is it so, or am I mistaken?"

In a few words Mrs. Summerville told all the facts of the case, which were listened to silently and attentively by the man of science, who at once drew the glove from his left hand (calling for a basin at the same time), turned up the right hand cuff of his coat and shirt-sleeve, drew from his vest pocket a lancet. Rosalie prepared a bandage, and in three minutes from the time he entered the room, Mr. Rankin was undergoing depletion as the first move toward a recovery of health.

The hot mustard-bath already prepared by Mrs. Summerville was then applied (the vinegar and ammonia having been promptly removed from Bill's head by the doctor), and linen cloths, saturated with pure cold water, were made to supply the place of the housekeeper's remedy. A prescription was then prepared, the medicine sent for, instructions were given how to administer the stuff, and the doctor departed, promising to come back at noon to notice the effects of his applications.

This physician, not being a fool, had also instructed Mrs

Summerville to give the patient a little cold water, from time to time, merely to moisten his lips, and alleviate the suffering arising from the burning thirst of nervous fever. Snappy and Rosalie at once assumed the office of nursing by turns, though, to say the truth, from daylight to midnight, during the whole term of Bill's sickness, one or the other of the Summervilles was constantly in the room. Snappy ate, slept, and drank in the sick-chamber.

Shortly after the doctor had gone, Snappy returned with M. Bremont, who was informed of everything, including the sharp judgment of the doctor. After expressing his sorrow for this new misfortune, and his gratitude to Mrs. Summerville and her children (he it was who had called Rosalie a beautiful girl a few weeks previously, to the great alarm of her loving mother), he drew forth his wallet and placed a fifty dollar bill in the hands of Mrs. Summerville, telling her when that was consumed, he would furnish her with more for the use of the patient.

But the simple creature said she was not sure Mr. Jones would like it when he recovered. He had paid his rent in advance, and she believed he had money; she was sure he was very proud, and he might think this was a kind of begging. She did not know exactly what to do about taking the money.

Georgy Nippers came to her relief, saying, with a sly wink at Bremont:

"This gentleman, you see, ma'am, is the agent of the lady whot is stole; and, you see, this money is like *wagers* comin to the lady's stooard, who is my friend Bill, you know. So, it's all right, ma'am, you may be sure, certain as I'm a live man—ain't it, sir?" added Snappy, looking knowingly at Bremont.

M. Bremont having verified all that Snappy said, Mrs. Summerville took the money upstairs, and having placed it in the bottom of a press of drawers, double locked it, then hid the keys in an old china vase that adorned the mantel-shelf in her bed-room

When Bremont departed, he said he would call twic see the sick man, enjoining it upon Georgy to came any moment the symptoms should assume a more ala racter. For one week did the fever rage with unaba the system of William Rankin, resisting with killing ol the doctor's genius and efforts to unchain the powerful his patient and restore it to health once more. D week, Bill knew no one, nor anything that was passi him—his reason being completely overthrown by the fire of his distemper. Perhaps it was all for the best, slightest intelligence of Lucretia had been received, al most powerful efforts and a lavish expenditure of been employed in every direction.

On the seventh day of Rankin's sickness, at ten o'c morning, Aminadab Florence, having sufficiently reco his bruises, was brought before the committing mag examination on a charge of burglary and abduction. ment that pervaded the Empire City, arising from burglary and the bold and successful abduction of a di lady from the house of M. Louis Bremont, who was be a French nobleman, exiled from his native land court-room to suffocation. Madam Rumor, with he tongues, had so shrouded our heroine in mystery, and affair with so much romance, that the entire commun tip-toe to get hold of the facts. Some said the abd was a member of the royal family; that Charles the Louis Philippe were both cousins of the lady; that h tion for the house of Bourbon, had rendered her ob the house of Orleans, and that her abduction was gallant Louis Philippe's *coup de coop*, a plan he was have adopted on several previous occasions, as thus bird would not sing for him, its music was confined to a The ladies declared—with less charity and sense than

—that it was all a sham; and that in a short time the modern Helen would return to the world fast married to her faithful Paris. The "*Boys*" said it was "a 'cussed' shame that any 'forriner' should be premitted to pitch right into the middle of the burgh and kidnap a monstrous hansum woman, right under the nose of the police, and no one to catch him, nairy time; but if it was a run-a-way nigger wench that had been carried off by her lawful master, every stove-pipe parson in the city would have bin on his trail before you could chirup *what ye 'bout* onst, they would."

Everybody agreed at least to one fact, to wit: that Aminadab Florence knew as much about the abduction as he did about the burglary; for he had confessed in jail, under the dread of death, that Padilla had set him on to the burglary for the sole purpose of stealing the dressing-case containing certain toys and articles of dress belonging to the lady who had been abducted, and which articles had been worn by her when an infant; but he stoutly denied knowing anything about the abduction, swearing, by the beard of Abraham, he had never seen the lady. But in the opinion of those to whom his confession had been made, this was all fal-de-ral, and the Jew was near being subjected to the style of interrogatory adopted by Reginald Front de Bœuf with Isaac of York in the good old days of John Rex, of big contract notoriety.

Presently the officers entered, sustaining Aminadab on either side, who was yet so lame that he tottered as he crawled along to the prisoner's dock. As the Jew entered, there was a loud buzz of whispers from the auditors, which induced an obese officer, with a nose shaped like a powder-horn, of a deep, carmine tint, studded with small purple mulberries, to cry out "order!" which order was duly disregarded by the outside sovereigns, whose remarks about the Jew became louder and louder every instant. The magistrate then addressed the *nose orné*, instructing it to

keep order in the court. Whereupon the same functionary vociferated with the full power of his lungs: "Keep order there, I say, or I'll have you all fined five dollars a piece for contempt of court."

This last effort of the human butt (for the court-crier is certainly the butt end of justice) had the desired effect; for the *people* ceased whispering to indulge in a quiet smile at the absurd idea of associating such a face, but particularly such a nose, with justice and good morals; for surely had a wag been called on to number and letter the purple hillocks on the illuminated field, the product (in orthography) would have been *contra bonos mores.*

However, order was obtained (a smile not being considered disorderly anywhere except in church), and the examination commenced.

The Reverend Joseph Cheathim was the first witness called to the stand. After he had been sworn, his eyes encountered those of M. Louis Bremont. It was the first time they had met since the unpleasant conviction had settled in the mind of Joseph that Bremont knew him to be a bad man. He blushed slightly as he bowed to Bremont, who was too well versed as a worldly *gentleman* to embarrass the clergyman with any unnecessary show of discourtesy, and returned the salutation with a quiet dignity and peculiar grace that told Joseph at once that he was despised but not threatened with exposure.

Then, in a clear, musical voice, as persuasive as the tones from the lyre of Orpheus, he related how he first became acquainted with the Jew, and every other fact connected with the dressing-case (except the lie by which it came *into* his possession, and the manner in which it left his possession) and the Jew, down to the moment when he declared he was awakened by the accidental discharge of the Jew's pistol.

At this point, the Jew interrupted the Christian, and swore by

Abraham's love for Isaac, that he had fired no pistol; but, on the contrary, the minister had fired at him. Joseph stoutly denied that he had ever used such a weapon in his life, and Aminadab as stoutly denied that he had fired the shot.

When Joseph had finished, the watchman who arrested Aminadab was called to the stand. He testified that his attention was first attracted by the report of a pistol, and seeing a sudden ray of light issue from the upper front-window of Mr. Cheathim's house, he rushed to the spot as the prisoner at bar fell to the pavement. On being asked if he saw any other person or persons present, he answered, that the night was so dark, and the storm so violent, it was impossible to see or hear anything without being close against it. There might have been others near by, but for the stated reason, he neither saw nor heard any one. He fully identified the prisoner at bar as being the man who fell from the balcony of Mr. Cheathim's house on the night of the burglary.

Aminadab was then asked if he had any witnesses. He answered that he had none on earth, but that there were plenty in heaven who could prove his innocence of all intention to steal anything but the box, which a black woman had told him Joseph had stolen from her. Here a murmur of disapprobation was heard through the room. The magistrate then asked Aminadab if he had anything to say, since he had nothing to prove. The court, for want of jurisdiction, could not issue attachments for the witnesses he had mentioned.

Aminadab said he hoped his honor would make the bail so low as to enable a poor man in distress to procure his liberty on complying with the law, until such time as he could be brought to trial before a jury in the Superior Court.

The Court remarked, that a man as well versed in the law and legal proceedings as Aminadab seemed to be, ought to know that the Recorder had no legal authority to fix the bail in cases beyond assault and battery and petty larceny. In was the duty

of the Recorder to remand him to prison to await a trial before the Superior Court. The papers would be immediately sent before that tribunal, and the Recorder had no doubt an application to bail would be favorably received by that Honorable Court.

This disposition having been made of the burglar, and not the slightest evidence being obtained on the charge of abduction, the Jew was returned to his prison, and the vast multitude of gossips, reporters, and pamphleteers dispersed slowly, cursing the obstinacy of the Jew for not confessing all about the carrying off the Lady Lucretia, *Countess of Allinthecloud—cousin-german of the exiled monarch, Charles X. of France.*

Thus, although nothing touching our heroine's disappearance had been elicited at the examination of Aminadab, the day following there were pamphlets selling through the streets containing the full particulars of the outrage, and the reasons why it had become necessary for the Citizen King to make the lovely countess a State prisoner. One of these publishers, a *little* more enterprising than his fellows in romance, gave a fair likeness of the unhappy countess, taken from a miniature of herself in the possession of a high foreign diplomatic functionary, between whom and the countess, it was suggested, an affair of the heart had once existed in *la belle France.*

These pamphlets were sold by thousands and sent to every section of the land. Of course the publication of such absurdities was the source of great annoyance to M. Bremont, who was assailed at every corner with questions from his acquaintances, as thus:

"How far, Bremont, are those papers to be relied on, respecting the singular disappearance of the lovely countess, your protégée?" "Ah! is there any truth in the statement of our Secretary of State having addressed a note to the French Minister on the subject? Ah! I hope his interference in this matter may not disturb our amicable relations with Louis Philippe. If the

countess were really guilty of treason, he should have sent a special envoy to demand her extradition. Ah! our people don't like this way of carrying off folks from our cities without the authority of law."

Nothing was too ridiculous for the romance-loving, wonder-seeking people. Each succeeding day, the papers contained paragraphs with more important particulars gathered from the highest authority, but names were suppressed for the present lest the cause of the lady should be injured, and many of her friends in high positions compromised. And thus a second week passed away without any tidings of the lost Lucretia.

And how fared our faithful Rankin during this fortnight of popular excitement? He was yet upon a bed of sickness, if not of death itself. The fever had been driven from his brain, whereby his reason was restored to him; but as yet the man of anatomical and medical science had not been able to drive the enemy out of the body of his patient. What a change disease had wrought upon the noble fellow! Everything prostrated but his faith and courage; unshorn of beard, emaciated and feeble as an infant, voice diminished to a whisper, volition to a merely perceptible motion—how little he resembled the Mr. Jones mounted on the stack of cotton at Montgomery, watching for his mistress, a few weeks before!

It was just before sunset, a mild beautiful evening, on the day of Aminadab's examination, that M. Bremont entered the chamber of the sick man. The doctor, Snappy, Mrs. Summerville and Rosalie were present; Rosalie was in the act of administering a teaspoonful of medicine, Snappy was arranging some books and bottles on the mantel shelf, and the doctor stood apart with Mrs. Summerville, giving her some instructions in a voice so low as to be heard by none but themselves.

When Bremont appeared, he extended a hand to the doctor and the lady, inquired after the patient, and wanted to know if

Bill was strong enough to hear any good news yet, for Bremont was anxious to tell him that the dressing-case and all the evidences it contained were now actually in his possession. The doctor shook his head and said, he really did not know what kept Bill alive, without it was his determination not to die until he had been revenged on Padilla; talking a little would not hurt him if he could find the power to speak, which the doctor very much doubted; and he was not sure, but that a little very agreeable intelligence would produce a good effect. His stomach seemed to have entirely lost all power of absorption, *that* was the great difficulty, for it prevented his medicines from acting. He had tried all the stimulants known to materia medica, that could possibly be used with any safety, and yet had failed to awaken any action whatever. If a change did not speedily take place, the man must certainly die.

Now all this was very intelligible to Bremont, who knew very well that if the stomach failed to distribute the remedies through the proper channels, the doctor and doctorstuff were quite useless to the sufferer; and you may be sure he was greatly alarmed by what he heard.

Approaching the bed, he took the sick man's hand in his own, felt for a pulse and found none, or next to none. But Bremont was no raven about a sick-bed; he had been a soldier, and often in company with death, and he knew how to cheer a sufferer. A bright, benignant smile spread over his grave, but benevolent face as he bent over Bill, and told him the box and all its contents were at last in his possession. The doctor was watching the sick man's face while Bremont was speaking. Bill received the intelligence with evident satisfaction; and as the case was a desperate one, Bremont thought he would try the effect of an innocent fib. So he told Bill that they were sure to find Lucretia and Padilla before long, for they now knew he had not left the city, since he was seen only yesterday lurking about a certain house; and that

the most effectual means had been adopted to secure him without delay.

At this intelligence, Bill raised up both arms at the elbow joint and clutched the air with his fingers, his eyes brightened, and a warm dew burst through the skin of his forehead, while a rather fierce smile crept about his unshorn lips. The doctor, who was watching Bill's face, drew a small leather case from the breast pocket of his coat, from which he took a phial of bright red liquid, of which he put five drops in a wineglass of pure cold water; and before Bill had time to give expression to a single word upon the intelligence he had just received, the wineglass was at his lips, and he swallowed the subtle tincture. The effect was wonderful. A stream of electricity, well directed upon his nervous system, would not have produced more startling results.

The doctor and Bremont immediately raised him to a sitting posture, while Snappy rigged a chair and some pillows at his back to support him. He clenched his hands, his eyes flashed, and his lips twitched. But he had not spoken a word yet; the doctor did all the talking, and it was of the most lively and cheering description.

A tablespoonful of strong warm chicken water, a little salted, was then administered, and in five minutes after, a tablespoonful of *brandy and water*, a little sweetened, was given; and the Kentucky mustard having been prepared, strong plasters were applied (having been sprinkled with red pepper) to both wrists and ankles and on the pit of the stomach, which was converted into a receptacle for chicken water and brandy toddy, alternately for the next thirty minutes, to the great annoyance of the sick man, who exhibited a strong inclination to enter into conversation. But the doctor assured Bill he understood all he was about to say, and as he (the doctor) intended leaving the room shortly, Bill could do all the talking he desired to his

friends when he should have departed. And the chicken water and brandy toddy continued the war until by dint of their own efforts and those of their powerful auxiliaries, the mustard and pepper plasters, a head of steam in the shape of pulse, was raised to the extraordinary action of thirty two, *faint*.

However, this was a good omen, for the man of pills and powders rubbed his hands, smiled, winked and declared Bill was worth a whole dozen dead men.

Bill revived rapidly under the influence of Bremont's intelligence and the doctor's red drops, to the no small satisfaction of all his friends. The doctor having given some private instructions to good Mrs. Summerville, was about leaving the room, when that lady inquired how long the mustard and pepper plasters were to be left in their places, to which the doctor replied, they were to be left upon the patient until he complained loudly of their burning. "For," said that sensible mediciner, "the more he feels the fire of the plasters, madam—his chances for recovery become stronger. Therefore if he complain, and cry out about the smarting of his bracelets, be sure it is a sign of the rapid return of a healthy and vigorous action in the nervous system—that the blood is circulating freely, and that his stomach is prepared to enter upon the duties of its office once more; do you understand me, madam?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said the lady; "but you have not yet told me how long to keep the plaster on."

"Why, as he is a brave fellow so far as corporeal suffering is concerned, and not likely to make much complaint, you had better remove them the moment you find him sweating from every pore in his skin. Then let the particles of mustard and pepper be carefully washed from the irritated skin with sweet oil, and soft linen cloths saturated with that article, wrapped around the parts loosely. Should he show any disposition to eat, *then*, why you may give him some strong beef tea with all the grease skimmed from it and a few bits of stale baker's bread toasted very crisp, broke

into it. As for drink, you must give him occasionally a tablespoonful of light brandy sling. I will call again before it will be necessary to alter this treatment—Good evening."

The last fifteen minutes were the most important period of Bill's existence. Had it not been for the timely coöperation of Bremont's *fib*, and the red liquid from the doctor's mysterious leather wallet, the engine of life would have ceased playing, and I should have lost a hero; and that would never do at *this* stage of the work I am performing.

Bill, from that moment, began to mend, but very slowly. The bluff yet delicate attention of Georgy Nippers, with his constant readiness to look on the bright side of everything—the fairy-like movements of Rosalie about the sick-bed, with her ever radiant smile of encouragement, and the unaffected gentleness of Mrs. Summerville, were powerful adjuncts to the doctor's skill. It's true that Harry Summerville being confined all day to his business, was seldom present when the sun was shining, but all his evenings were passed with the sick-chamber club, and he contributed largely to the comfort of every member by his fund of gaiety and anecdote.

Harry was only *almost* fourteen, as we heard him say to his mother—but he had been in a wholesale ship chandlery since he was *ten*, commencing as errand boy and advancing rapidly in the knowledge of business, and the good opinion of his employers, who had known Captain Summerville only to honor and esteem him; and at the time of Harry's introduction in these pages, he was a man in knowledge and experience. During the more than three years he had been a clerk, the counsel of his mother, not to lose any opportunity of improving his mind by study, had not been neglected. Being a very apt scholar and a very proud boy, the ambition awakened in his young bosom by his glorious mother, soon made him the master of so much useful knowledge, that there was no point too lofty for his aspiring and determined spirit.

We must leave him and his company now, to look after some other characters belonging to our history.

After the examination and committal of our worthy friend Aminadab Florence, the Reverend Joseph Cheathim avoided M. Bremont and made the best of his way home in a very unenviable humor, which, by the by, was not much improved by finding Becky Woods and the slave Alice seated in his poor parlor when he entered that apartment. Joseph immediately "smoothed his wrinkled front," and gave the colored sisters a hearty welcome and a hard shake of the hand.

The *ladies* received his manifestations with the cool and consequential dignity that the negro always assumes toward those whites who have degraded themselves by falling upon the *nigger level*. The woolly-headed daughters of Africa took the hand of Joseph, not because they felt honored by his condescension, but because having once been on terms of intimacy, friendship and confidence with this shepherd of the Lord, they felt it to be a duty they owed the church not to sprinkle ashes on its oily head until it was prepared for the visitation. Joseph knew full well his visitors were upon the business of the dressing-case and the swindling lie by which he had almost stolen it from Becky Woods; and knowing also, *that* colored persons propensity for *scan. mag.* with the pale sisters of the church, he was particularly anxious to compromise the matter by any humiliating sacrifice of independence or dignity his assailants might be pleased to exact.

This was a tight place for a man of Joseph's genius. It certainly should prove a most excellent lesson to other white-faced, white-livered miscreants whose sole capital is an abundance of hypocritical philanthropy for the down-trodden descendants of Ham. To me, who first saw the light in the city of New York, and who resided exclusively in that city until upon the verge of manhood—it always appeared wonderful how men and women,

certainly of education and refinement in all *things else*, could so far forget their duty to society, and disregard the ordinations of nature so far as to labor for the degradation of their race to an equality with the highly flavored Hottentot and their ebony skinned cousins.

In speaking thus, I'm guilty of no injustice to the negro race. I hold it to be a self-evident proposition that the negro was created for servitude ; and I confidently challenge any member of the various Anti-Slavery societies in the Republic, to advance a single line of logic strong enough even to shake the proposition. What a shame, one will cry, to speak thus of a human being made in the image of his God, having the same feelings that white men have ! To be sure, says some *other* fool or villain—it is horrible to contemplate all the persecution the *black wing* of the human family is subjected to. And by that style of cant and exclamation on the part of the fool section of the black equality army, and the inexhaustible gas of the rogue section, *white* humanity is sought to be torn down to a level with the serfs of nature.

That all men are born free and equal, is a pure humane and most just proposition, from the advocacy of which I will never depart. Its meaning is clear and simple as any of the great truths ingrafted on our Constitution and laws by the mighty genius of Jefferson, its author. The freedom and equality of men, can only be understood by those who study the immutable laws of nature ; for it is by the study of her laws alone, that we behold the necessity for every grade of human being by which society is formed and permitted to work harmoniously. Nothing can be more preposterous than the idea of freedom and equality of all men, within the construction placed upon that language by the crusading army for the emancipation of the American negro in particular, from servitude, and all the woolly citizens of Africa in general, from the slavery of black skins, woolly heads, flat noses,

monster lips, *strong* constitutions and cannibalism, that the great Creator has so unmistakably imposed on them. All men have an equal right to the warmth of summer—the cold of winter—the sunlight, the showers, the beauty and fragrance of the trees and flowers, to be protected against oppression or injustice—to enjoy his own, to be treated kindly and to be respected for the faithful performance of those duties which his position in the great human family demands of him. The whole creation contains not a single useless thing either animate or inanimate. The horse by cultivation is made subservient to man, and when we reflect upon the many uses he is successfully applied to, who can doubt his having been created expressly *for* the uses to which he *is* applied? And although he belongs to a class of animals inferior to man, he has his feelings and his equal rights with his master, who is entitled to his services so long as he returns the quid-pro-quo, in the shape of corn, oats and hay, good usage and lodgings, such as good horses are entitled to and good men are always willing to award, and we have statutes to punish brutality to the horse. The wood-sawyer, street-sweeper and coal-heaver of the family have their equal right to the blessings showered on us by Heaven, and like their inferior (the horse) they are entitled to what they earn —to justice and kindness from the family, who on its part have a perfect right to sequester him from his natural inheritance, and even to take his life whenever he transgresses the harmonious action of the whole. But do their *equal rights*, confer on them the privilege of a seat in the studio of the artist, at the table of science or in the cabinet council of the nation? No! because they have not inherited from God the genius to adorn those places, which is the most irrefragable evidence of their having been created to perform the duties of those offices in which they are found. It will be no answer to this proposition to say, "They may rise from their lowly state." If they *do* so, it will only prove they were not designed for the place they originally occu-

pied. *Mind* will always triumph. Genius can no more be suppressed than lead can be converted into watch springs.

Again, is not the performance of their duties necessary to the comfort of the family? Oh, yes! Every one will agree to that, but they *will* not understand how the *necessity* demands from its creator a fit operative to perform just that duty.

Upon what hypothesis, then, is the African negro entitled to more consideration than the woodchuck, street-sweeper, and coal-heaver? He, in his primitive state is not superior to the uncultured white man (except in odor), nor has civilization, as a rule, *ever* advanced him to an equality with the other race. Then, what were they created for?—Nothing? Is the wisdom of Providence to be doubted? Yes, by fools and fanatics. They were created for *use*, for nothing is uselessly created; and the use for which they *were* created can only be gathered from the capacity the Creator has given to them. And what is that capacity?

I refer the reader to the truly disgusting exhibitions that are of daily and nightly occurrence in the negro churches of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, and this too, by the negro who has never seen Africa, who only inherits the classical resemblance of his progenitors, and who has been undergoing civilization in those emporiums of virtue and religion, for the last hundred years.

A negro prayer-meeting on an August Sunday night, with one or two white-faced, white-cravated creatures in their midst, for the purpose of getting up the excitement to the roaring point, will strike the curious reader with amazement; and if he be an honest man, he will pity the negro and no longer wonder that some men should be found base enough to declare that from all observation and experience, they are firmly of an opinion that the negro was made to be servant unto his master.

The same laws that govern the white portion of the human family, must be applied to the negro. To let him remain idle is

sinful, and productive of nothing but evil to the subject; therefore he must be employed in those offices for which alone he is gifted with capacity to serve!

The insincerity of the *keen* abolitionist is fairly exhibited in the character of Joseph Cheathim, while the most disgusting feature of the whole black idea, is truthfully reflected by that gentleman's contemptible subserviency and base dissimulation toward black Becky Woods and the slave Alice. These characters are correct representatives of the well-disposed African, under the influence of the English and Northern American *black idea* of the nineteenth century. All the impudent assumption and repulsive familiarity of their character being clearly attributable to the working of the grand scheme for equalization and *political power*.

In the South alone, the negro enjoys true freedom. There the white and black children play together, and bite their candy from the same stick. The negro is cordially taken by the hand in the street by the gentleman, when not having seen each other for some time. The servant and his master, both heads being silvered by time, go fishing and hunting together on those terms of friendly intimacy, which can only exist between the two races from family association and intercourse. In the cities they are house servants and mechanics, in the rural districts, they are farm laborers.

Now, I can well imagine that I hear some people say: "Yes, yes! Why does he call a plantation a farm? Does he (me) try to make it appear that the poor slave on a plantation has no harder work to do than a laborer on a northern farm? That will never do, Mister Author; we know better."

What will the honest, hardy, industrious New England farmer—who first ploughs the stones out of a field to build a fence with, before he attempts to cultivate anything; and who considers *himself, his* two sons, and two "helps," a sufficient force, with

the necessary cattle, to work a hundred-and-sixty-acre farm—say, when I tell him that the ordinary force on a sugar or cotton farm averages a field-hand to five acres; that the soil is free from obstruction; that cane is planted only every second year; that it is ploughed two or three times during the spring and summer, precisely as *he* ploughs corn (both plants growing very similarly and precisely in the same order); that when it matures it is cut down near the earth, with heavy cane knives, at a stroke, and conveyed in carts to the sugar-house, where the saccharine is ground out by steam, and with far less manual labor than the operative employs at a New Jersey cider-mill?

The cotton requires still less labor; the only tedious portion of the season is the picking, which really commences in September. Any one who has seen the operation will at once admit that mowing and cradling is five times more laborious than cotton picking. As to the treatment the farm laborer receives, the inquiring reader is invited to study the following facts, and then to express an opinion:

A healthy field-hand, from nineteen to thirty-five years of age, is worth to his master from eight to eleven hundred dollars cash—his labor is worth one dollar per day. His master cannot get rid of him if he becomes lame or sick.

Now, under this state of facts, what sense is there in the assertion, that farmers and planters are reckless as to the health and happiness of their laborers? The libel is an emanation of those societies that boast of their Joseph Cheathims as leaders. But my digression is much longer than I intended it should be, and therefore I shall leave all further developments touching the *black idea* to the characters in our history.

We (that is, the reader and I) left Joseph in his poor parlor shaking hands with Becky Woods and the slave Alice, the former all smiles and blandness, the latter full of dark dignity and insulted pride.

"Don't disturb yourselves on my account, I beg," said Joseph, opening the ball. "Be seated, and excuse me for a few moments," and he *bowed* himself out of the room.

"Becky," said Alice, "I doesn't half like dat Massa Cheathim."

"Alice," rejoined Becky, "I have frequently told you not to use the word master any more. Mr. Cheathim is our minister, not our master."

"Hi! hi! Becky, I 'spect it all de same; de minister do wid de niggers jis wot dey pleases."

"Not so, Alice, you are very wrong to speak as you do. If Mr. Cheathim deceived me to get that box, you may be sure he had some good intention in the matter."

"I tell you, Becky, he say he would fotch me to my young missus—cause, God knows, I love every hair in her head. And now, whot is it? why, young missus is stole, and she ain't got no box, too. I say no white man can't take a cake from a nigger in Orleans without he soon cum to truble from de masta."

"Alice, if any one is injured in this business, *I* am the person, not you. From the intimacy and good feeling Mr. Cheathim and myself have always shown to each other, he should not have told me a fib, for I would have given him the box even if he had told the truth."

"You would?" said Alice with a shriek; "den, Becky, you isn't no better 'en him. When I guv you dat box, I told you de president uf de susiety wanted it, an I tole you I mus keep it for young missus, for she sure to come for it some time. You tole me de box would stay wid you safe, till I wanted it. An now you guv it to de minister jis because he is boss of the church."

"Well, Alice, we will speak of this some other time; Mr. Cheathim is coming, and you shall see that I know how to exact the respect due me."

The next instant Joseph entered the room with his usual smile,

and pretending not to notice the cloudy faces of his colored sisters, seated himself and spoke as follows :

"I am happy to be able to inform you that Mr. Bremont has received some intelligence as to the place of concealment of his ward the lady Lucretia, who was so basely stolen from his house on the night of the burglary here. And my restitution of the box and contents, that Alice and you have so faithfully preserved, has greatly increased his happiness. By the by, Alice, when the young lady returns to her friends, I am hazarding little when I say your fidelity will be richly rewarded. I am not at liberty to speak more plainly *now*, but you may rest assured I will do you ample justice with the lady and her protectors."

Now Alice knew this was all humbug, and from the impatience she manifested while the parson was speaking, it became clear to Becky's mind that there would be an explosion if she did not interfere, and she said :

"Really, Mr. Cheathim, no one can be better pleased to hear that Miss Lucretia is likely to be found than we are ; but don't you think you ought to have told me the whole truth when you came for the box ? There *was* a time when Becky Woods would have taken an oath that your lips never spoke a falsehood, but I would not do it now. Besides, in all the little affairs concerning the return to freedom of our oppressed brothers and sisters in the South, you used to let me into all the secrets ; and *here* was a matter that you kept from me. Now, I think you should give some further explanation of your conduct, for it would sound very bad in the congregation as it now stands."

At Becky's allusion to the congregation having knowledge of the affair, Joseph endured a slight chill ; for he well knew that Becky, with her doctoring and gossiping, had access to the wealthiest and most influential old ladies in his church, and he also knew that she was regarded as the best authority and circulating medium for all the *trifling* errors committed by the flock over

which he presided; and he determined to strain a point or two to hush the matter up.

"You see, Mistress Wood," said Joseph, "the whole matter can be explained in a few words, and entirely to your satisfaction. Will you do me the favor to listen?"

"Certainly," said Becky, with an air of grave dignity that she imagined was bringing Joseph to himself and the truth, and Joseph proceeded:

"When I called on Alice, she was not inclined to be communicative on the subject; and as Mr. Bremont was then waiting for the box at this very house, and as I did not wish to disappoint him, fearing some objection on *your* part, I told you that Alice had sent me. Indeed, she did tell me you had it, and that she wished to restore it; so you see, after all, the wishes of Alice have been fulfilled."

"Why, really this *does* look all right—don't you think so, Alice?" said Becky.

"No, I doesn't," said Alice; "becase I tole him I wanted to give de box to young missus myself. An' long afore dis time—jis when I fus come—Massa Cheathim was all time askin 'bout de box, and I wouldn't tell him noffin. I spect he know all 'long Miss Chreechy was comin."

"Alice, you do me wrong, I assure you," said Joseph, who found Alice a tougher customer than the venerable Becky on the score of belief, and he resolved to make another effort at the cost of another lie (of course), to mollify the black infidel, who seemed determined on mischief.

"Why, Alice," said Joseph, "when I presented that box to Mr. Bremont, with your compliments, he said"——

"*Beware!*" said a voice at the unfastened door, with such emphasis that the black sisters clasped their hands, and rolled up their eyes, till nothing was seen but the whites of those organs, while Joseph turned pale, and threw his eyes in the direction of

the sound, without daring to leave his seat. He knew the voice of Rachael, although it was disguised, and the same spirit that haunted his ear on the night of their quarrel, again whispered *murder* in his heart.

The case was far different with the darkies. Both Alice and Becky believed the sound to be a supernatural warning, and at once resolved to fly from the house, and were really preparing for a start, when Joseph arose hastily and closed the door, saying the voice was that of a crazy man named Hawthorne, who had resided in the house since the death of Mrs. Cheathim. Becky grew calm on the instant, saying she remembered him very well, and also knew his beautiful wife, who had not been to church since the dreadful calamity had fallen on her poor husband. What Becky said had its influence on Alice, who, not having distinctly understood the word spoken, was simply startled by the strangeness of the interruption. Order being again restored, Joseph persuaded Becky to say nothing about the affair *yet*, and that in a short time he would *introduce* both her and Alice to the French merchant, and they should hear the truth of the story from his lips.

Becky promised silence, Alice grumbled, and they both departed after a familiar shake of the hand from the worthy pastor.

Joseph no sooner found himself alone than a hot sweat burst through his hide, which was soon followed by a chill that instantly closed every pore, and set him shivering like a drunkard with delirium tremens on a frosty morning. He had cause to shake, for he knew that Rachael was on the look-out for him, and he sincerely believed his eloquence and dissimulation would have a better chance of success with the devil himself than with that deeply injured woman, particularly since he was thoroughly convinced she was a sincere repentant and convert to the laws of God and virtue. There he stood trembling—the

moisture now hanging in cold, clammy drops upon his skin—debating which method to adopt to avoid the interview he dreaded, when the door slowly opened, and Rachael Hawthorne stood before him.

She was pale and calm—no other feeling than that of deep-seated melancholy was resting upon her. Real sorrow for the past, and pure penitential suffering for the future, were making inroads upon the roundness of her face and person, but the light which shone from her eye was celestial. It whispered into Joseph's base, black, cowardly heart, *despair for him*, and salvation for the erring daughter of sin and sorrow, who could turn from the unhallowed past, and, in the divine spirit of Paul, fall down before the glory of God and humbly supplicate for mercy and forgiveness. She saw the condition of Joseph instantly, and in a spirit of kindness tried to relieve him.

"Joseph, has not remorse yet touched your heart? Is there no room in your bosom for aught but falsehood and depravity? Have you forgotten the promise I made? That vow is registered in heaven, and as surely as I hope to depart this life in peace, I will fulfill that vow. To what a depth of depravity have you fallen; how little is there of the angel in you, now that you are unrobed of your dissimulation. Alas, Joseph, crime and deceit have festered in your heart so long, that I fear the pitying angel of repentance is shut out forever. Awaken! Cast aside the demons, passion and pride, and woo the Redeemer, in whose sacred name you are leading a myriad of souls by the eloquence of language as strange to *your* heart as it is soothing to the hearts of others. Arouse, I say, from the degradation of companionship with negroes—from the humiliating terror of exposure at their hands. Become in truth that of which you are now the counterfeit representative. Be God's minister to all, both black *and white;* be proud to comfort any in distress; do not stoop to

falsehood with any, but particularly with the uneducated and vulgar. See what a contemptible position you occupy toward that negress, Becky Wood. You are compelled to stoop to the grovelling condition of a snake before her, and by the force of deception, that would mount the blush of shame upon a truly proud man's cheek, secure her favor—the favor of not holding you up to public scorn, if not to detestation. Joseph, I am not reproaching you, but warning a blind man rushing headlong to destruction. *Be* warned, then, ere it be too late. You soon will lose the jealous vigilance with which I have sought to save you from further crime, for to-morrow I leave this house to enter a new home, a new life, surrounded by new scenes, a most sacred duty constantly before me, hope and repentance my only other companions; and though you may never approach near enough to behold the human wreck that you have made—for you will not be welcome until you come a remorseful man—*my* prayers—the prayers of her whose peace and virtue you have destroyed, whose immortal soul you *would* have sunk in everlasting night—will be offered at the throne of grace for you. And now farewell! It may be long ere we meet again; but if the time should come, and the light of virtue again dawn upon your gloomy soul, remember—when the first tear of pure repentance gushes from your heart—that she whom you so basely betrayed, so deeply wronged, forgave you all, and gave up her vengeance unto God. Farewell!"

Without waiting for Joseph to look upon her, she left the room as calmly as she had entered it, but her eyes were full of tears. Her voice had not faltered once while speaking, yet the effort had called up many recollections of the past, which, as they flitted like shadows through her mind, caused her the most intense agony, and she wept at parting.

How long Joseph would have remained in the position she left him in, had he not been roused from his very brown study, I am

unable to determine; but a few moments after Rachael's departure, a servant entered to say a woman was at the door on particular business, and would communicate with no one but the master of the house.

Joseph left the room to attend the summons.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRIAL AND THE RESCUE.

It was now the middle of May. For nearly ten weeks Lucretia had been a close prisoner in the house where we left her, without ever having seen any one within speaking distance, except Beatrice, her jailer, and the old negro man-servant before spoken of. From the windows at the rear of the house, she had a fine view of the Hudson River for several miles up and down. She could see the men working on the water craft, sailing to and fro, while from the front and gable windows she could see pleasure parties riding up and down the then beautiful Bloomingdale road, a half mile below, and the same distance above the house; but immediately in front, there was a beautiful rise of woodland, which sloped gracefully toward the road on one side and toward the river on the other; and it was on the river slope of this picturesque vicinity that her prison-house stood. It had, properly, two fronts, for there was a large, old-fashioned balcony looking toward the river, and another toward the road, and if she could have gone upon either of these, it would have been an easy matter for the lady to have made signals to some one even at the distance of half a mile; but the cautious Padilla caused all the upper windows to be closed with fine strong iron gratings, so when she was in the upper part of the house, it was almost impossible to thrust her finger into the open air.

As I have said, the house was very solidly built, of heavy red

freestone, from the quarries about *Nyack*, in Rockland County, some thirty miles up the Hudson River and immediately opposite Sing Sing state prison. The roof was of tiles laid in mortar, at least four inches thick. The walls inside were brown coat plastered, and whitewashed; the ceilings, displaying the floors and beams above, were painted the beautiful fresh color of a three-quarters ripe lemon, and greatly relieved the glare of the huge white walls, on which not a single ornament of any kind appeared. The window-frames and balconies were of that beauful white pine, for which our northern and eastern forests are so celebrated. The garden of the house contained about ten acres, and was neatly arranged with fine fruit and shade trees, and flowers of every variety, which, under the influence of a mid-May sun, were bursting forth in richest beauty and fragrance. And this garden was the play-ground of Lucretia's prison.

Padilla had only visited his captive three or four times since we saw him there in the last of February, and although she was totally ignorant of all that had passed and was passing *out* in the world, the conviction—so well sustained by hope—that she would soon be liberated, had been wonderfully effective in sustaining her under the terrible wrong she was suffering. Yet, sorrow for the suffering of those who held her dear, and who, of necessity, were in a state of dreadful uncertainty as to her fate, had stolen the bloom from her cheek, the perfect oval from her face, but not the firmness from her lip nor the fire from her eye.

Poor Rankin, too, had suffered much. From the date of his sickness—which commenced on the second day after the abduction of Lucretia—he had been under the hands of a skillful doctor and the best of friends for nursing; and at the opening of this chapter, he had begun to take short rides in the country for the fresh air. Snappy always accompanied Bill, as dry-nurse on those occasions.

Poor little affectionate Rosalie, too, had been quite ill, simply from exhaustion, by her constant attendance on Mr. Jones, who had become so attached to the little fairy that he would take no medicine except from her hand.

She, too, had been ordered to be upon the river as much as possible, that the young summer's wind from the bosom of the noble Hudson might restore the roses to her cheeks and lips once more. Harry Summerville had been early used to boats by his sailor father and other captains who were friends of his family, and since he was thirteen years old he had been owner of a beautiful little pinnace carrying a light sprit-sail; and as he was very skillful in the management of his little vessel, he had leave of absence three afternoons in the week to take his little sister on the river for an airing.

Of course Bremont had been compelled to inform M. Belleville of the dreadful evil that had fallen upon Lucretia, and consequently the letters from New Orleans were but a repetition of the sorrow into which that most amiable family was plunged by the catastrophe.

Elise had been taken ill of a fever and was not yet perfectly recovered, while Margaret's more silent sorrow had so worn her down in health, that the doctor had ordered M. Belleville to take both his daughters to the sea-side as soon as the sad condition of Elise would permit her to be moved.

M. Belleville had also informed Bremont of the safe arrival in France of young Henry Monthemar, to which he added, that if the health of his dear children would permit, he would hasten to New York for the purpose of joining in the search for his lovely adopted daughter.

And now we proceed again with the order of events. On the twentieth of May, Aminadab Florence was put upon trial under an indictment for burglary—a second true bill having been found against him on two counts, as follows: for abducting a woman,

named and known as Lucretia Padilla, and for having aided and abetted in said abduction of the woman aforesaid in the peace of God then being, etc., contrary to the statute in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the commonwealth.

The excitement in and about New York had been and still was so intense, touching the daring piece of villainy so successfully practised upon a young lady already invested by romance with a dozen different characters of the most enchanting description, that the court-room was densely crowded an hour before the judge took his seat upon the bench.

Among the spectators, there were two particular pairs of eyes more active than any other eyes in the room, and those belonged to Padilla and George Snapp, Esq., both of whom were thoroughly disguised, and in the most prominent places for seeing others without being seen.

Aminadab was brought into court and seated in the prisoners' dock, while the clerk read the minutes of the preceding day. The next thing in order was the calling of the jury, ninety of whom answered to their names. The court then asked the district-attorney if he was ready to proceed to business, and that gentleman having answered affirmatively, the crier of the court—the same with the nose "orné," whom we saw in the committing magistrate's court—bawled out "order," with such a twang—his voice seeming to escape from a mass of fat and whisky—that the judge was startled by the sound, it being so unlike the voice of his own functionary who was too unwell to attend court that day; but when the judge, by leaning over his bench, *saw* the apparition whence the sound escaped, a smile gathered around his eyes, for an instant only, and then with some severity of expression he inquired of the *nose*, who placed him on duty there. To which the *nose* replied, "The sheriff, sir." Then the judge requested that the sheriff should be sent to

him. And when the sheriff did appear, the judge whispered something to him; the executive officer smiled, then went to the *nose*, and whispered in *his* ear. Then the *nose* seized his hat, and commenced waddling out of court in a lemon humor.

Now, all this whispering had drawn the united attention of the spectators to a focus upon the *nose orné*, and when it began to move out of court, the *people* began to appreciate the motives of the judge for removing such an inflammatory article; for a general titter arose from the crowd, and swelled into a very loud smile, which, reaching the ear of the *nose*, he turned fiercely toward the multitude, his face glowing with fury, and clapped the thumb of his right hand upon the egg-like point of the offensive organ, and twirled the fingers next to the aforesaid thumb most maliciously. This was a piece of freemasonry which every one seemed to understand, and nobody seemed capable of resisting, for the smile became a laugh so loud that half a minute elapsed ere order could be restored.

The district attorney then told the court he was ready to proceed in the case of the State *vs.* Aminadab Florence. The sheriff then called Aminadab Florence, who stood up and said, "*Here.*"

The clerk then told the prisoner the court was about to proceed to the trial of his case, and asked Aminadab if he was ready to be tried. Then Mr. Sampson Slash stood up at the bar, and told the honorable court that he had been retained as counsel for the accused—that after a most careful examination of the affair then under consideration, and consultation with his client, he had concluded to enter the plea of guilty, if the honorable court would suspend sentence for the term of three months to enable the friends of the accused to find and arrest *Padilla*, and punish him for provoking the burglary for the sole purpose of stealing the dressing-case belonging to the lady who had been abducted;

and also that *Padilla* might be punished for that offence, of which he alone was guilty. The court acceded—the plea of guilty was entered—the trial for abduction was continued indefinitely (the district attorney having no evidence to procure a conviction against the Jew on that indictment) and Aminadab was ordered to be confined to the prison at Blackwell's Island to await his sentence, which the court would well consider, as the truth or falsity of his statements should appear in the event of the arrest of Padilla.

The court-room was then cleared of the mob, who once more went forth disappointed. Padilla chuckled as he went off, thinking what a nice time they would have catching him.

Snappy went away better pleased, for he at once concluded that the Jew could give some clue to the whereabouts of Padilla and Lucretia, and he resolved to get permission in a few days to visit the prison on the Island.

Snappy hastened to his convalescent friend, and gave him full particulars of the trial and plea of guilty by the Jew, and also stated his opinion relative to the Jew's knowledge about the hiding-place of Padilla. Bill, as had become his habit for some weeks back, at once adopted Snappy's idea, simply because it might lead to something, and said:

"Georgy, I will go with you to the Island if you'll wait a few days. I am growing strong wery fast; my last few rides has done me a power of good. And do you know, Snappy, that I am conwinced we'll find her yet all safe and sound? I do, as sure as you're born."

Bill was seated in a large rocking-chair, and although he had been rapidly recovering his health for the last two weeks, he was very thin yet, and feeble. He would take short walks in the twilight for exercise, with his faithful friend, and pass his days listening as Snappy read the "Old Countryman" and "Bell's *Life*."

That same day, M. Bremont called to inquire after him, saying that within an hour after the trial of the Jew, a man answering the description of Padilla had been seen in a house over in Cherry street—that, on inquiry, the police had ascertained that a Spanish woman named Beatrice lived there, but that she had been absent about ten weeks, and had only been known to visit the house two or three times during that period. The neighbors knew little about her, but on one of her visits she had told the old negro who used to saw wood for her, that she was nursing a sick lady out of town—that a constant watch was kept up about the house, while Messrs. Hays and Jackson had already commenced a diligent search in the suburban districts.

This information had a most lively effect upon Rankin. He sprung to his feet, and strode up and down the room with a speed that promised to put him to bed again if he was not checked. Snappy soon brought him to an anchor in the big chair, where he sat and laughed like a child who had found a bauble.

The information of Bremont was perfectly true. Padilla had been seen in the house by an old woman who was looking for Beatrice, and on asking at the corner shop where Beatrice was, had been told that no one knew; whereupon the old woman had returned, and looking through a small window that opened in the alley beside the house, had taken another good look at Padilla, who was seated at a table writing. She noticed the furniture was the same—that the whole interior was undisturbed, and wondered who the stranger could be. At that moment, her attention was attracted by the entrance, by the alley gate, of the old negro wood-sawyer, whom she well remembered to have seen working for Beatrice. She at once left the window, going to the negro, took him back into the street and told him there was a strange man in the back room of the house, though Beatrice was not at home. The negro then said he had been told Beatrice was out of town, nursing a sick lady. After a conference of a few

moments, they agreed it was best to give information to the police; and away they went together, and told all they knew with so much mysteriousness that a couple of officers were dispatched to examine the premises and the strange man.

On the way to Cherry street one of the officers, whose name was *Merrit*, asked the old woman what kind of looking man was in the house, when she described him so accurately that the officers looked at each other knowingly and winked. They each took a fresh chew of tobacco, and Merrit exclaimed:

"Come along, old lady, and if that chap turns out to be the man we're looking for, this will be the best day's work you ever made in your life. Step out, old blacky (to the negro), you shant be forgotten neither."

When they came to the corner of Cherry street near the house, the four halted to consult. It was settled that the old woman should enter the alley to see if the man was there yet, while the officers should so dispose themselves as to be in readiness in case of an alarm. The old woman soon returned, stating that he must have gone, for the shutter of the window through which she had seen him was closed and fastened on the inside.

The officers then entered the alley and thence to the yard. They examined the outside of the premises well, and calculated all the chances of escape by the rear. They then dismissed the old couple with orders to be as silent as death. The names and residences of these people were taken by the officers, one of whom returned immediately to the office of police with the important information that had been gathered from the old woman, and for further orders, while Mr. Merrit remained on the watch.

The chief of police immediately sent back three more officers with instruction to watch the house on all sides, and to remain on duty till relieved by himself. As may be well supposed, the five thousand dollars reward offered by M. Bremont for the recovery of our heroine and the detection of Padilla, had something

to do with this activity, but justice demands that I should record in these pages, the fact, that at the period of which I am writing, the municipal police of New York was never in a better condition.

The next morning, Padilla visited his prisoner simply to inform her that she must prepare herself for a journey. Lucretia's eyes flashed at this information, for she thought the hour of deliverance was at hand. Padilla saw the fire, and maliciously thought to smother it at once, by adding that her journey would be by sea. Lucretia smiled—yes, that woman who had been so savagely torn from her friends, and had suffered almost solitary confinement for more than ten weeks, smiled at her tormentor and told him she would expose his villainy to the first human ear that she could reach.

She said he did not dare to remove her on board of any ship, for the story of her wrongs and sufferings would impel the sailors to cast him into the sea. That his infamous career was almost ended—nothing could save him from public punishment and execration, but flight or self-destruction. She defied him then as she had done in the second chapter of this book, and even went so far as to taunt him for his failure against honest Bill Rankin, whom he had threatened to cage with her. She so enraged the monster, that had it not been for her strong resemblance to her mother, whose image was ever in his eye, he would have stabbed her there. Perhaps Lucretia would have been less bold, had it not been for the settled conviction in her mind that Padilla did not seek her life, but wanted her rather as an agent for a terrible vengeance upon the Viscount Montmorencie, a person whom she imagined herself entirely unacquainted with.

After cursing her and her whole race—her father in particular, he flung himself out of the house without saying anything more about her journey, and rode away. And so Lucretia passed this beautiful May morning. But how the afternoon and evening? we shall see; but very differently, I promise you.

Being once more alone, for the hundredth time she searched for something to write *with* and something to write *on*, but failed. When her meals were over, her knife, fork and spoon were taken away, and there was not a scrap of paper as large as a shilling to be found. Could she only have found a pencil or pens and ink, or even ink without pens, she would have torn strips of linen from the pillow cases and sheets to write upon, and then committed the missive to the winds in a true spirit of romance, trusting (as your twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth century romances always have it) that her lover would come from France, and be searching for wild cherries in the neighborhood and of course pick it up. But not having what she wanted, she took a copy of Goldsmith and commenced reading in the "Vicar of Wakefield, and so the day wore on.

Toward two o'clock, Beatrice came in with her dinner, and while Lucretia was eating, her jailer spoke as follows:

"Madame, I have to inform you that the horse and wagon are already prepared to take me to the city for the purpose of making some preparation for the journey you are to take. I shall be absent till near sunset, and as the negro Cato will be locked in the lower part of the house without being able either to come to you or to go out, it is necessary that you should demand now anything you may require before I return."

Lucretia regarded her intently for a moment and then said:

"What voyage am I to take?"

"My business is to obey," replied Beatrice, "and not to ask or answer questions. But you have not yet said whether you require anything, or not!"

"If," said Lucretia, "I am about to be carried out of the country, I would like to have pen, ink, and paper, to write to my friends, that they may know I am yet living."

"And to tell them where you can be found I suppose," rejoined Beatrice.

"No," exclaimed Lucretia, "you shall be present when I write, and to you will I intrust the letter, to be placed in the post-office. I will escape if I can, and bring your scoundrel master to the punishment he so richly merits; but all I ask of you, is the privilege of simply telling my friends in whose power I am, a fact doubtless already known, and that I am as well as circumstances will admit of. You shall read the letter and seal it yourself, and I will even trust you to send it to the proper direction."

Beatrice mused a short time, her eyes bent upon the floor and a meaning smile upon her lips, then said:

"I'll think of your request, and give you an answer when I return." Then musingly speaking to herself, she continued, "it can't do any harm. I can keep back the letter till the last moment; besides, he need not know anything about it; I think I'll oblige this woman; yes, I think I will."

"And if you do," said Lucretia, answering the other's soliloquy, "I will forgive you all the evil you have done to me, by too faithfully serving a bad master. Be warned by me, Beatrice. The day will come when you will curse *him* for his baseness, and yourself for ever having been his dupe. That man knows not faith, love or honor. Were you to know the hideousness of his villainy to me, your woman's nature would shrink with horror from him and his service. I have told you nothing, for I believed you to be a fit instrument for such a master; while the sternness with which you have executed his orders, left me nothing to hope for from you."

"Are you not really his slave?" said Beatrice.

"Foolish woman," replied Lucretia; "think you Padilla would exercise all this precaution in keeping me, were I really his slave. Look at me well. See you the slightest evidence of the presence of one drop of African blood in my veins?"

"Did not a slave called *Alice* steal the papers proving your slavery?" said Beatrice, evading the other's question.

"The base, lying traitor!—No, she stole the evidences of my birth and parentage, and of Padilla's accursed crime against me."

Lucretia was growing warm and eloquent, and there is no knowing what she might have done with Beatrice, if that person had remained to hear more; but she put an end to the interview, by starting to her feet, and exclaiming:

"It's almost two o'clock, and I must be going. I will return before dark, when you may expect an answer to your request. Good morning."

Saying which, she took the dinner things and left the room, locked the door, and the house was silent as the grave once more.

Lucretia rose and paced the room for a while, immersed in deep thought. Her elastic mind was laboring nobly for the release of her body, but it labored in vain; there appeared not the slightest chance, except through the connivance of Beatrice. Could she be bribed? The solution of that question now occupied all her thoughts. She felt she had made an impression on Beatrice, who evidently had been deceived by Padilla, into the belief that Lucretia was a slave, in fact; and oh! if she could but fix the perfect knowledge of that deception on her jailer's mind, what might not the promise of a large reward do! She had no money, but she had diamonds in her ears, and upon her fingers; these she would give as an earnest of what should follow. She resolved to try it as soon as Beatrice should return. Then the poor girl started to her feet again, and paced the room rapidly, her face illuminated with hope. Oh, how she did wish for sunset! The hour scrawled away. Had the old fashioned clock that stood against the wall, ticked in unison with the throbbing of her heart, sixty minutes would have flown for every five that now limped lazily away.

Two o'clock came, then three, and a whole age seemed to have *bloomed* and withered in the time. The clock struck half-past

three, and she rushed into the back, or river room, which had a westerly view, to note how near the sun was to the Jersey hills, but he was nearly three hours high yet. The ripple of the broad-bosomed Hudson was dancing in his rays, bounding upward to kiss the young summer's wind as it floated away to the northeast. But, see! what is it that has arrested her attention? Mark how eagerly she leans forward to her grated window, shading her eyes with her left hand while her right is clasped upon her bosom, as if to suppress some violent emotion. Her teeth are closed, lips firm, nostrils dilated, her breathing thick and her eyes gleaming like stars through the gloom of night. It is a boat she sees, standing in for the shore, immediately in front of the house, not more than a quarter of a mile distant. It is the first time she ever knew a vessel of any size to approach that shore. There were two persons in it—who could they be? Was it Padilla and some other ruffian come to tear her from her present prison for a worse? Or was it the faithful Rankin coming at last to her rescue.

Nearer and nearer came the little bark, until reaching the shadow of a projecting woody point, Lucretia made out the persons to be male and female, and the next instant the boat was hidden from her view by the trees and shrubbery along the river-bank. Still, she moved not, but, like a statue, stood gazing on the spot where the boat had disappeared, until her over-wrought feelings gave way, when she sank overpowered upon the floor and wept, like a child waking from a fairy vision to the stern reality of life.

Let us leave her weeping, while we take a look at the boat and her crew. It was no fairy craft with water-nymphs to guide it, but a real Whitehall pinnace, built of the best cedar slabs, laid on *clinker*, to as nice a set of white oak ribs as ever fronted a wave under the influence of an *ash* breeze. There she lay, snugly mored in a little cove; her light sail neatly brailed to the mast;

the rudder unshipped and stowed; the purple plush cushions turned upside down to save them from soil; the white woollen mop, nicely clean, lying in its place along the stretchers; the stern-line handsomely coiled down on the after grating; the oars and boat-hook in their places, and a blue cloth frock coat, evidently belonging to a lad some fifteen years of age, was thrown over the back board, and concealed the vessel's name. Let us be curious, and move the coat. Ah! there's the name—*Lucretia;* gilt letters on polished rose-wood. And now, as we look again at her unshrouded, stayless mast, we see a deep blue pennant gracefully yielding to the light breeze, and on which *Lucretia* once more appears in snowy characters. But where is the crew of the Lucretia; not far off, if one may judge from the sound of that voice calling so loudly to *Rose*, and bidding her put the Leghorn hat upon her head, if she was not anxious to become the color of a *heathen.*

There they are under that immense oak, standing on a little knoll, about three hundred yards from the flesh and blood, Lucretia's prison, and they are no less important personages than Harry and Rosalie Summerville, who had sailed seven or eight miles up the Hudson for diversion and air, and had run into this romantic spot to gather honeysuckles, roses, lilacs, and snowballs, the abundance and beauty of which had attracted the attention of Rosalie, who no sooner saw them than she wanted some for her mother and some for the chamber of Mr. Jones, whom Rosalie had taught to love flowers during his illness and convalescence.

To Harry Summerville, the wish of his sister Rosalie was a command; therefore, she had no sooner extended her little white hand in the direction of the flowery paradise, and exclaimed, "*Oh, how beautiful!*" than Harry responded, by bringing his boat sharp up to the wind, heading for the cove, exclaiming at the same time: "You shall have a whole boat-load, Rose, if you want them; they're growing wild." And that's how they came *to be there.*

"Now, Rose," said Harry, pulling out his fine silver-mounted Derringer pistol, and examining the flint and the priming in the pan, "I'll bet you a pair of long white kids for the first ball next winter at the dancing-school, against a bunch of cherries, that I knock off the tip of that cedar at the first crack. What do you say? is it a bet?"

"Now, Harry, I thought you took all the trouble to come in here to get me some flowers; and here, you want to be shooting that snake-pistol of yours at a mark. You know you told ma it was to kill snakes with, and nothing else."

"So it is, you little puss you; but how am I to shoot a snake if I don't practise some? And will not the flowers be all the fresher for being left on their stems until we are ready to go?" Then looking at his watch, a present from his employers, he added: "It's only a little more than half-past three yet, and we've an hour to spare here for sweet air and rest."

"Yes, yes!" rejoined Rosalie, "but suppose the wind all dies away; what then, mister sailor?"

"What then! why, have I not a pair of nine-feet sculls in the boat along with the oars? and won't the young ebb set down with a rush at five o'clock? Do you think, Rose, I have not counted all the chances? What's the use of being an *old salt* if you don't study these things?"

Rosalie looked at her brother earnestly, with a mournful smile resting on her seraphic face, and said, while the tears gushed to her eyes:

"Harry, what would mother say were she to hear you speak so about being a sailor for true? remember poor father." Her voice faltered, and she could speak no more.

She could distinctly remember her father, and the last kiss and blessing he gave her when he started on his fatal voyage; and since that time she and her mother had had a horror of the sea; while Harry's inclination for boats and the river kept both his

mother and sister in terror lest he should persist in following his father's profession, which he no doubt would have done, had he not known his dear mother and sister's repugnance to it. But as the case stood, he had firmly resolved to anchor himself on shore for life.

When he saw how moved his little sister was by his bluff but playful language, he laid down his pistol, seated himself by the side of Rosalie, and gently drawing her curly head upon his bosom, said:

"Rose, dear, dear Rose, forgive me. I was not in earnest, indeed, indeed I was not. Look up, my sweet sister, and let me dry your eyes, for it breaks my heart to see you weep. Look, dear! there, kiss me Rose, that's right. Now I promise you by the memory of our dear lost father, I will never be a sailor nor follow the sea for a living. *Now* don't you believe me, Rose?"

Rosalie turned her dewy eyes upon her affectionate brother's, cast her arms around his neck and drawing her upturned face to his, kissed him tenderly, but spoke not.

"Oh!" said Harry, "that means *yes*: don't it, my little Rosey?" She smiled and nodded her head, but did not dare to trust her voice, which she knew was too unsteady yet for speech. Harry understood her feelings, and, taking up one of her long curls, playfully drew it out to its full length, then permitting it to spring back again into curl, said:

"Now, Rose, I've a great favor to ask of you."

"What is it, Harry?"

"Why, this! that you will promise me to say nothing to our mother about my foolish talk just now, for you know, Rose, how she *would* keep thinking about it, and just be unhappy all the time; and Rose, I would rather take that pistol and shoot the top of my head off than be the cause of a moment's unhappiness to my mother."

"Oh, I believe you, dear Harry. I won't say a word, indeed I

won't; but *please*, Harry, *don't* talk of shooting your head." Her voice began to tremble again, which the affectionate brother noticing, he clasped Rosalie in his arms to the great damage of her Leghorn bonnet, and rocking to and fro with his precious armful, exclaimed:

"You sweet little imp, you love your bad brother Harry too much; and if you don't stop being so tender (here he half smothered her with kisses), I'll—I'll—I don't know what I won't do to you."

As he released her from his embrace, the mangled Leghorn fell to the ground. It was in such a shocking condition, that they both broke out in a merry peal of laughter, and commenced to restore it to something like its former shape and appearance.

The little scene between the brother and sister being ended, and good spirits restored to both, Harry picked up his pistol and said:

"Now, say if you will take my bet."

"Yes! but I know I shall lose, because I saw you hit the little iron ball on the old gate-post back in our yard, at the very first shot, and I am sure *that* is much smaller than the cedar tip."

"So it is," said Harry; "but don't you see the cedar tip is constantly moving in the wind? Now the real science of pistol shooting consists of a quick eye, and a steady hand; and there is but one way to ascertain whether you possess these qualities or not, and that way is to shoot at a moving mark—so here goes Now sister, you keep your eye on the cedar, and you shall see what kind of an eye and hand your brother Harry has."

She looked at him one moment, admiringly, his handsome muscular figure drawn up to its full height, his uncovered head erect, his proud eye fixed on the mark, and she wondered if any other little girl had such a handsome brother. Having found a good piece of ground to stand on, he raised the pistol slowly, and before she thought he had time to take aim, he fired, and the little tuft of

green fell to the ground. Rosalie sprang forward with the speed and grace of a fawn, seized the trophy and held it above her head in child-like triumph.

Harry's shot had done more execution than either he or his sister dreamed of; but to know what that execution was, I must transport the reader to the room in which we left Lucretia weeping on the floor. She is still in the same crushed condition. At the report of the pistol—which burst upon her ear like a clap of thunder through the reigning stillness of the house—she sprang to her feet, hastened to the side window, and a scream of joy burst from her agonized bosom as she distinctly saw Rosalie holding up the tuft of cedar her brother had so gallantly brought down at his first shot.

And now for the first time since her sequestration, her strength seemed to fail her. Her head grew dizzy, a film spread itself over her eyes, she trembled in every limb and was forced to cling to the iron grating of her window to prevent her falling to the floor. She was terror-stricken now, lest the boy and girl should go away before she could manage to attract their attention. This thought revived her some. She staggered to the fireplace, seized upon the brass firetongs—tied her white cambric handkerchief to one of the prongs, and thrust it through the iron bars to its full length—the other leg of the tongs passing through another opening, like a pair of dividers opened at an angle of forty-five degrees. Having hung out her banner, she sustained herself with the left hand while with her right, she grasped the handle of the tongs and waved the signal up and down in the breeze.

We must leave her engaged in this novel method of telegraphing and once more return to Harry and Rosalie under the big oak-tree.

"Now Rose," said Harry, as he began quietly to reload the pistol, "I suppose you think that was a chance shot; but to convince you that I am really a good shot, I'll make another, just as good as the first."

Rose laughed at her brother's earnestness, and she laughed, in her pride of his skill, but she feared to provoke him to hazard his present self-satisfaction by another such a trial, lest he should be less fortunate than before, and miss his mark: however, she ventured to ask him what he intended to shoot at now. He had just primed the pistol as she spoke, and he answered, he did not know yet. Then stepping a few paces from the dense foliage of the oak, he cast his eyes about him for a proper mark. Presently his attention was fixed upon the upper window in the house where Lucretia was. He dropped the muzzle of his weapon toward the ground and shaded his eyes with his left hand, still gazing intently in the same direction. Rose, who had been watching every movement of her brother, followed his gaze until her eyes rested on Lucretia's flag; then bounding to her brother's side, she almost whispered in his ear:

"I see it, Harry. I wonder if they wish us to go away."

"I don't well know what it means," said Harry, "but I am determined *to* know before I put foot in my boat again." Saying which, he took his hat from the grass, drew it firmly on his head, tied the crippled leghorn on Rosalie's head, put his pistol in the leather case he carried for safety, and taking his sister by the hand, continued:

"Come along, Rose, let's see what they *do* want, anyhow."

And he made a straight line from the tree to the house.

"Harry, do you know who the people are?" said Rose, as she clung closer to her brother.

"No, indeed," said Harry, "nor do I care. We have broken down no fences nor trodden down any grain or flowers in getting here, and if they wanted us to go away, they might have been civil enough to have sent some one to tell us so, and not try to frighten us away as if we were thieves. Come along, Rose, I'll soon know what that white rag means. Don't you be afraid, sis."

And away they went directly toward the house. And oh, how

Lucretia's heart jumped when she saw that bold boy, hand in hand with his gentle sister, coming directly toward her prison window. She thought of Beatrice now, only in terror lest she should return too soon. The sun that had stood still in the heavens while she *wished* for Beatrice, now seemed rushing down the west with lightning speed.

Oh, for the power of Joshua for one little hour, *she thought*. She pressed her face so eagerly against her prison bars, that she bruised herself; and such was her position when Harry halted not a hundred feet from the window. The children saw the lady and the barred windows, and looked at each other in silent amazement. The lady then beckoned them to come nearer, then she pressed her finger on her lips in token of silence, and then she rolled her vast black eyes stealthily around her, and motioned them to be cautious. Harry and Rosalie thought it was a madhouse, that the poor woman was crazy, and Harry so expressed himself. But Rose said that could not be, for the fences were low and weak, and there were no gratings to any of the openings but those upstairs. Harry yielded to this logic and went nearer to the window. The lady reiterated the sign for silence, which she immediately followed with the motion of writing upon her hand. Harry and Rosalie nodded *yes*. Then the lady pointed emphatically at them as if she wished *them* to write something, when Harry, quick as thought, drew from an inside breast-pocket of his vest, a memorandum book and pencil, then looking toward the lady, he beheld her rubbing her hands, smiling with fierce delight. Harry spoke in a low voice to Rose, saying:

"I'll just ask her what it all means, hey?"

"Yes," responded Rose, and Harry wrote on a leaf of his book—Who are you? What do you want? And then he began to wonder how he was to get the paper to her. The lady divined his perplexity, and motioning him to wait awhile, she left the window.

The tongs were now suddenly withdrawn from the iron grating, and once more brought in use by our heroine. She found means to wrench them apart at the joint, and tearing a sheet in ribbons made a string of the pieces—tied one leg of the tongs to one end of the linen string, and wound the other around her hand; then she poked the stick of brass through one of the openings, and gently lowered it to the ground, and signed to Harry that he must send her some paper and a pencil; so he cut his in two pieces, tore out three leaves from his book, made them all up in a neat roll, and tied the string around it. The lady smiled approvingly, and commenced pulling up the parcel.

When it reached the grating she had some little difficulty in twisting the parcel so as to get hold of the end of it through the bars, but she succeeded, and eagerly undoing it, glanced at the two questions Harry had written, smiled, and motioned him to be patient. She then wrote some lines on one of the leaves Harry had sent her, and making it fast to the string, the tongues-leg was again seen poking through the bars. Harry seized the paper, and commenced reading, as follows:

"My dear friends. I am a lady who some ten weeks since was stolen from the house of M. Louis Bremont."

When Harry got thus far, Rosalie leaped in the air, clapped her hands together, and screamed out at the top of her voice:

"It's Lucretia, Mr. Jones' mistress; I know it is, I know it is."

And she capered about like a wood-nymph dancing to the music of Orpheus.

"Who dat out dare?" said a voice from the lower interior of the house. The game of silence was at an end, since it was clear there was some one on the alert. Harry looked up to the window, and said:

"Madam, are you really the lady who was abducted from

M. Bremont's house? You need not fear to speak now, for we are discovered already. But no matter, I'll not leave here without you, that's certain. Speak to me if you please, and tell me how to help you out."

Lucretia, in as few words as possible, told Harry and Rosalie everything relative to her captivity, and concluded by telling them that she expected to be carried entirely beyond the reach of help that very night—that Beatrice, her jailer, was absent, but would return before sundown, and that the only other person in the house was an old negro man.

"Who dat out dare, I say?" said the same voice, from the lower interior.

"I'll tell you who's out here, you black sinner, and if you don't open the door at once, I'll blow your brains out—Rose, give me that pistol."

As he said this, he whispered to Rosalie, that he wanted to frighten the negro only. She gave him the pistol.

"Now, Rose," he continued, "you stay here by this window, and don't move an *inch* till I come back. Madam," speaking to Lucretia, "I'll have you out if I am forced to break the doors down."

And away he went to the front of the house to put his threat into execution; but poor Harry found there was a great difference between strength of mind and strength of body. He plied feet and hands, then threw his body against the door, which was of heavy old oak and obstinately refused to quit its casing. There was no stone about large enough to be of any service, but there was a large locust post lying on the ground that might be used as a battering-ram; but after applying all his strength, he succeeded in only raising one end of it. He then tried all the doors and window-shutters with the same result. Then hastening to Rose, his face streaming with perspiration and his lips parched with feverish anxiety, he called out to Lucretia, saying:

"Madam, you must not be frightened, but I am going to try a *ruse de guerre* on this Hottentot to make him let me in. I am going to pretend to set the house on fire to burn him up; so don't you be frightened if you smell the smoke. Come with me, Rose—quick!"

And away they went to the river front of the house, where Harry placed his mouth close to the door and shouted to the negro:

"Now, you black rascal, I am going to burn the house and you along with it."

Then he commenced tearing down a portion of the rickety fence, piling it up at what he considered a safe distance from the house; then drawing the charge from his pistol, prepared a piece of paper, flashed the powder in the pan, thereby lighting his paper, and the next minute the pile of combustibles was in a blaze. He and Rose, who was boiling over with excitement, rushed to Lucretia's window and told her once more not to be frightened. At that instant, the negro came to that side of the house and commenced the most infernal uproar ever listened to from one human being. He begged and prayed not to be burnt alive.

"If you is a Christian," shouted the unhappy negro through the window-shutter, "in de name of de Lord don't murder dis poor nigger in cold blood. Oh, massa! please to let me out—I'se meltin dis minnit."

"If you are melting, take an axe or a bed-post and smash open one of these shutters, and I will save you; but if you *don't* break the shutter or the door open, you shall burn."

He then ran to the river front to see that his fire was doing no harm, and as he turned the corner of the house, his feet were rooted to the ground with horror. Some sheaves of dry straw on the large balcony, which had escaped his observation, had taken fire from the sparks of his bogus conflagration, and the

entire gallery was in a blaze. The flames were darting their hot breath through the iron gratings into the house, while their fierce kisses were clinging to the wooden window-frames with hissing fury, sending in the air a volume of smoke and sparks that already began to fall in showers on the surrounding fields. The unhappy boy flew to the other side of the building beside his sister. He was the image of despair. He sank upon his knees before the prison window, clasped his hands in a transport of agony, and exclaimed.

"Oh, God! the house is burning and you are lost."

He fell forward on his face as if dead. Rosalie screamed and flew to her brother to rouse him. Lucretia flew to the river room and saw the truth in an instant. As the danger was most imminent, her mind was clear and courage strong. She knew the house could not burn, being built of solid stone, and she at once concluded that if she closed the door of the river room which opened into her chamber, she would confine the fire to the outside gallery and the window-frames in that room. Acting on the thought, she pushed back to the side window in time to hear Rosalie say:

"Run, dear Harry, toward the road for help. You will be sure to find somebody. The house is all stone and can't burn down."

"Angel!" ejaculated Lucretia to herself.

"Dear Rose, she will suffocate with heat and smoke even if the house don't burn."

"Not so," cried Lucretia from the window. "I have closed the door of the other room, and there's nothing there to burn but the window-frame. Do as your sister bids you. Run to the road *that way* (pointing) and bring help to force the doors."

During all this time the fire was roaring and crackling—for there was a mass of wood in the old balcony—and the poor imprisoned negro was yelling most hideously. But what Lucretia

had said infused new life in Harry, who flew in the direction indicated by the lovely captive. He had not gone far, however, ere he sent forth a yell of joy, and threw his hat high in the air He saw two men running toward him—*one* running very fast, and the other feebly. He immediately recognized Snappy to be the foremost man, and Mr. Jones the other.

The youth bounded forward, exclaiming: "Tis she! tis she—Lucretia burning to death!"

As Snappy passed him, he said, "Help, Bill," and rushed to the nearest door of the house. It would not yield to his tremendous kicks. He turned and waved his hat to Bill, who, having been told it was his mistress, seemed gifted with superhuman strength, and was at Snappy's side in an instant.

"Take that post," said Harry, pointing to the locust.

The three seized it, and rushed headlong, end on, against the ground floor door. Its bolts gave way—it flew open, and in they rushed. Harry shouted, "This way," and rushed up the stairs to the second story of the house. On the landing they were met by another door, bolted, but it was too feeble for the united efforts of the party. It flew open at the first shock.

"Which is the room?" said Bill.

"It must be this," said Harry, pointing to a door with the lock on the outside.

"Stand aside," said Snappy, drawing the same slung-shot from his pocket he had worn since he had been in pursuit of Padilla, and, with a few well-directed blows, struck the lock from its fastenings. They rushed into the room; it was full of smoke, but nothing else. But they were not left long in doubt, for they heard the voice of Lucretia in an adjoining room, loudly calling to her rescuers. She had heard the noise of the battered doors, and the shouts of the men even above the screaming of black Cato; and as the period of her deliverance approached, joy lent her strength, and her voice was distinctly heard above the sur-

[illegible] Snappy and Bill threw themselves against the door—which was the weakest of them all—with such violence, that the fastenings gave way so readily, that they were both pitched headlong into the room, at the very feet of her they came to save. The room was almost suffocating with smoke and heat, but a single glance was enough to show who her deliverers were.

"Quick, man," said Bill, as he and Harry were leading Lucretia through the other room; "the fresh air will do you a heap of good."

Snappy was leading the way through the smoke which filled the rooms almost to suffocation, holding the slung-shot still in his right hand. He gained the ground floor as Lucretia and her conductors reached the door at the top of the stairway, when an outcry from a female voice arose, as if struggling with some one. The party hastened downstairs and followed the voices—for Snappy was expostulating with the female—out in the garden, where Lucretia sank upon a bench, perfectly exhausted. Rosalie was at her side in an instant, and drawing from her pocket a beautiful little flacon of powerful ammonia and myrrh, placed it to Lucretia's nostrils, while Harry seized a cocoanut shell dipper from a grape vine, and filling it with fresh well-water, brought it to Rosalie, who bathed Lucretia's face with the cool, refreshing element. This timely assistance to a mind and nervous [illegible] like Lucretia's, revived her immediately, and looking [illegible] beheld Beatrice firmly in the hands of Snapp[illegible] ing for orders.

"Do you know the woman, ma[illegible]

"Yes," said Lucretia, "she [illegible] the [illegible] jailer since my im[illegible] road *that* [illegible] depart."

During all this [illegible] there was a mass [illegible] prisoned negro [illegible]

found herself at liberty, than drawing a Spanish dirk from her dress, she sprang forward with the speed and ferocity of a panther, to do death upon our heroine, in which effort she would have been perfectly successful had she not tripped upon the grass and fallen violently to the ground, dashing her head with such force against a large earthen vase, standing near the bench on which Lucretia was seated, that it was smashed to pieces, cutting her head severely, and completely stunning her. Lucretia rose hastily, and told them to place the unhappy woman in safety. Then expressing a wish to gain Harry's boat without further delay, the party made for the river bank as fast as possible. The rudder was shipped and the sprit-sail set in a moment. Lucretia, Rosalie, and Harry then entered the boat, the line was cast off, and all ready to start, when Lucretia said:

"William, look after that poor woman and the negro Cato, when you return to the house, then hasten to town and tell M. Bremont to meet us at the foot of Perry street, which my young deliverers here tell me is the best point to land at. Is it not so, my sweet little R[illegible]?"

"That's wha[illegible] says, lady, and he always knows best." Harry blushed.

"Now, lad, [illegible] a word of advice before you shove off. [illegible]ow you c[illegible] [illegible]e boat as well as a man, and a heap [illegible]tter than man[illegible] [illegible]ut jist make a clean streak for the [illegible] shore, an[illegible] [illegible]acrost agin till you fetch the landin'. [illegible]rt, and [illegible] along with you."

[illegible]ow of [illegible] [illegible]as shoved from the shore, the sail [illegible] the e[illegible] [illegible] which had shifted to the west, and [illegible]omen[illegible] [illegible] little vessel was standing out on [illegible] bo[illegible] [illegible]dson, on the larboard tack. On [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible]eeze freshened [illegible] steadily, [illegible] [illegible] was hull d[illegible] [illegible] anxious

"Come, Bill," said Snappy, "we've no time to lose. That craft sails jist like a witch, and we must move quick to be in time at the landin."

They reached the house, but found not the woman or the negro. The burnt timbers were smoking and blazing still, but it was evident the destruction of the back balcony and window-frames comprised the whole damage. Having no further business there, they speedily regained their top buggy, and turning the horse's head toward the city, started at a perfect Third Avenue *lick*, in as square a trot as ever fell from the foot of *Old Top-gallant*.

It was now about a quarter past five o'clock, and thirty minutes since Snappy first gave notice to Bill that there was a house on fire. Their horse was fresh and very fast, consequently they reached the dwelling of M. Bremont, on Fourth street—a distance of about six miles—in thirty minutes. Bremont was seated by the lower parlor window, which was open; when the foaming horse flashed up to the door, and he saw who occupied the wagon, he sprang from his seat, and was at the front door before Bill was fairly on the ground. Bill no sooner touched the sidewalk, than Snappy, without saying a word, drove off the buggy.

"The carriage, quick," said Bill, panting for breath. M. Bremont gave the order without asking any questions, then turning to Bill, he beheld him fainted upon the sofa in the hall. The poor fellow had been overtasked in his feeble state, and the violent reaction had prostrated him. Some water, and then some wine, speedily revived him, and he briefly related all that had occurred, just as the carriage drove up to the door.

Bill was persuaded to remain where he was, and Bremont ordered his porter to mount the box with the driver, then taking his pistols entered the carriage, and ordered the coachman to fly to the foot of Perry street. And away went the coach at a dashing pace—and away went a man dressed with a light green

ɔd coat, glossy black hat with a low crown, red and
d kerchief about his neck, with the ends streaming
ears mounted on a square-tailed, square trotting horse,
le. snaffle in his mouth and as neat a *hog skin* on his
ver sustained a Centreville jockey, after the carriage.
Georgy Nippers as an outside rider or body guard.
v for the boat commanded by Harry Summerville. As
: was under the command of her helm, Captain Harry
he Jersey shore, so as to bring the now strong ebb
his starboard quarter, and so fresh was the wind that
ninutes he had run within the vast shadow of Wee-
ɔuntain, a distance of nearly four miles from his starting
: then went about on the short tack making nothing
t, when he reached the York Island shore. His next
ie Jersey shore brought him to the *Champs Elysée*
osite Perry street. Lucretia, who had been silently
Rosalie and pressing the little sylph to her bosom—for
ne now ventured to address the *man at the helm*, by ask-
y were "not almost down to Perry street?" to which
ied :
ady, Perry street is just under our fore foot, and with
ıpful, she would fetch it handily ; but you see it lulls
, and I am forced to let her fall off two or three points
: leech from shaking ; and it looks *so* unhandsome to
sprit in the doldrums."
. looked at the earnest mariner and smiled, while Rosa-
ıto the merriest laugh, exclaiming :
Harry ! what do you suppose the lady knows about
ng leeches, or your *doldrums* or *falling off two or three*
en turning from her brother (who was blushing to his
) Lucretia, she continued : "Dear Miss Lucretia, you
re Harry ; our father was a ship captain, and for that
s to talk just like a sailor. But I tell you what (to

her brother) I won't go sailing with you any more if you don't talk like a real land person."

"Now, Miss Rosalie," said Lucretia with one of her smiles, "I will not permit you to scold or laugh at my gallant young knight for speaking like a sailor. I think your brother handles his little ship most admirably. By the by, Henry, what is the name of your boat?"

Harry grew redder in the face, Rosalie laughed the louder, and Lucretia continued:

"I am sure you have not given a frightful name to such a beautiful little vessel?"

Harry said nothing, and Rosalie continued her merriment until Lucretia taking her in her arms, said:

"Tell me, you little laughing fairy, what is the name of your gallant brother's boat?"

"*Lucretia!*" shouted Rosalie with another burst of laughter that brought the tears to her eyes.

"Ah!" said Lucretia, "and have I been so much honored while I was yet a stranger to you?"

"You must know, dear lady," said Rose, "that ever since Mr. Jones came to our house he told us so much about you, that brother resolved to name the boat after you; so he changed the name from *Amphitrite* (which is so horrid) to Lucretia, and here's the name upon the back board in gilt letters."

"Do you see that coach coming down toward the river so rapidly? I wonder if your friends are not in it?" this was spoken by Harry, who brought the boat so near the shore that Lucretia could recognize the coach of M. Bremont.

"Yes!" cried the lady in answer to Harry's question, "those are indeed my friends. Shall I wave my handkerchief to them?"

"Not by any means," said Harry, "for it might be all a sham. Let us wait till they come nearer and show their own signals. I've no notion of losing all our present advantage by foolishly

falling into a trap. Now they stop, one man descends from the coach, and one from the box. Now a horseman rides up and dismounts. I know *him*. 'Tis Mr. Snapp, Mr. Jones' constant friend, it's all right now, madam, and I'll land you in a jiffey."

The boat was soon by the new pier, and in another moment Lucretia was in the arms of M. Bremont. Snappy lifted Rosalie from the boat and placed her in the coach with Lucretia, and the party drove off without delay.

Harry struck his mast, the wind being too light to work with —laid hold of his sculls, and in fifteen minutes pulled his boat safely to her berth by the new hay-scales at the foot of Christopher street

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MURDER—THE WILL—THE LIGHTNING.

For the first time, I call upon the imagination of the indulgent reader, for the reunion of our heroine with her friends in the mansion of M. Bremont. The scene can be better imagined than described, at least by me, and I therefore beg of you to give a loose rein to fancy and settle to your own satisfaction, that which presented an insuperable barrier to my retiring ambition. And now we proceed again with the story.

At half-past six o'clock on the evening of Lucretia's return to her friends, Messrs. Hays and Jackson, accompanied by two other officers of the police, entered M. Bremont's library.

You will please observe that their coming was not all providential, but simply in obedience to a message dispatched to the police office by M. Bremont, a moment before he started for Perry street to meet Lucretia. But M. Bremont was a man of business, quick to resolve and act.

In as few words as possible he told the officers of Lucretia's return, and the manner of its accomplishment, as related by the lady to him. Then Bill and George Snapp, Esq., who were present, gave a description of the house and its location, as near as they could, when M. Bremont inquired of Hays what was then to be done.

"Leave that to me," said the officer, who then turned to *Georgy* and said,

"What is to prevent you from going with us to the spot?"

"Not the slightest thing in this world, nairy time, that *I* knows on," responded Georgy, with a sharp jerk of his head that slightly disturbed the economy of his glossy and slickly combed hair.

"Then go with us to the stable at once," said the officer, who was interrupted by M. Bremont's tendering his own coach and fleet horses for the expedition. And without waiting for a reply he rang the bell, and ordered the large coach immediately. Some wine and glasses were then produced, and the party first drank to the return of the stolen lady, then to Harry and Rosalie Summerville, and then to the capture of Padilla. By this time the coach was announced, the four officers entered it, and Snappy mounted the box with the driver to direct their course; besides that, he said, he never felt quite right at the tail of a horse without he was within grabbing distance of the *ribbons;* and away went the coach, and away we must go after it, in the regular course of events.

It was some time after sunset when the coach drew up in the deep shade of the wood lying immediately in front of the house toward the main road. The party alighted, and with the most perfect silence, got their arms in readiness. The moon, which was in her second quarter, lent just enough light through the foliage of the wood to enable the party to proceed with little noise; and after a walk of about ten minutes, Snappy, who was on the lead, suddenly halted, making a low, hissing sound for absolute silence. Then, leaning forward, sustaining himself on the stump of a fallen tree, he listened very intently. He had gained the open ground; the house was in full view, not two hundred yards distant; there was nothing but fruit-trees and shrubbery growing between the edge of the wood and the house, but these made a sufficient cover to conceal a hundred men disposed to hide themselves.

Now, the reason why Mr. Snapp *hissed* for silence and *no motion*, was, because he thought he heard voices as he gained the edge of the wood. He listened a few moments and was convinced he was not mistaken.

The voices were heard again—male and female—so loudly, that the officers heard then distinctly, although they were from ten to thirty steps behind Snappy. A consultation was held in whispers, for there was little doubt in the minds of Hays and Snappy that the voices proceeded from Padilla and Beatrice, and the party at once took measures to secure their arrest.

They extended themselves along the line of the wood, their weapons in hand, and cautiously advanced in the direction of the voices, stealing along as much as possible in the shadows that fell from the fruit-trees and tall shrubbery that interspersed the ground. The voices were in anger, as if the owners were engaged in violent altercation, for the man exclaimed:

"You are a liar, Beatrice! you have betrayed my trust; and this story about the fire, two men and a little boy and girl, is a part of your accursed invention to impose on me."

"Padilla!" exclaimed she, faintly, yet with determination, "it is you who lies, and Beatrice who tells you so. I tell you again, that if I had not stumbled, the girl were now a piece of lifeless clay. Look at this lacerated head; is this, *too*, a part of my accursed plot? Thou savage beast, I have served you too well. *She* told me I would live to curse you and the hour I first met you; and the time is come now that I *do* know you thoroughly; I hate you and despise myself for having so long been the dupe of such a villain. Lucretia has escaped your clutches, though not by my connivance; yet I glory in it. *You—devil!—ingrate fiend* that you are!—are defeated in your schemes" (a horse neighed), "and now must fly!—fly, like a recreant dog to escape the punishment you so richly deserve! while I—Beatrice, the *slaver's* wife—the slave-captain's mistress, first, and deserted dupe

at last—will live—yes! and exult over your blasted hopes and constrained banishment!"

"Never!" shouted Padilla, as, mounted on a splendid grey horse, he leaped from the deep shadow of the house, wheeled suddenly, levelled a pistol, and fired. A scream followed the discharge; the officers rushed forward; Padilla, who had drawn a second pistol, seeing five men within thirty steps of him, changed his aim and fired at the foremost—put spurs to his steed, and fled in an opposite direction. His bullet had passed through Snappy's shiny hat, not more than two inches above the head. Several shots were fired at Padilla without the desired effect. A few moments showed the officers that pursuit was vain. Padilla had a good start and a fleet horse, and was rapidly approaching the turn in the road above the wood through which the men had advanced upon the house. The general attention was then turned to the woman, who they found upon the grass bleeding from a wound in the right breast. They carried her out in the moonlight, stopped the bleeding as well as they could, and gave her some cool water from the same cocoa-nut dipper used by Harry Summerville for Lucretia that afternoon. The woman revived some, and said:

"Thanks, gentlemen, you cannot save me. I want a priest—a catholic priest. I—I *must* confess before I die—quick! bring one to me if you would show mercy to a dying woman." And she fell back in the arms of one of the men.

"She wants a doctor more than she does a monk," said one of them.

"Fellers! don't joke with the dying, if she is a sinner," said Snappy; "every one to his own religion, I say. Let's put her in the carriage at onst, and git her a doctor and a priest both."

And without any more delay, Beatrice, who had fainted again, was carried to the coach, which once more turned toward the city, one man riding behind to make room for the wounded woman.

In less than half an hour, the coach arrived at M. Bremont's

door, but the woman had revived again and requested to be taken to her own house in Cherry street. Bremont and Lucretia, both of whom desired to have the wounded woman brought in there, yielded to her request, and the coach with its entire freight was once more in motion. When arrived at the house where Beatrice resided, she handed a key to Officer Hays, who leaped out of the coach, opened the door and raised a light in the hall by means of matches and a pocket lantern (a darkey). The wounded woman was brought in and placed on a bed, in a back room, while orders were at once sent to a surgeon, and to the Reverend Father Milkem. Candles and lamps were lighted in both rooms, and a woman from one of the neighboring houses was obtained to act as nurse for the moment.

In the meantime, Hays had gone outside to look after the special watch that had been stationed there since the woodsawyer's information had been received; not seeing them, and having whistled a private signal, without getting any answer, he returned to the room greatly annoyed at what he believed to be the negligence of the officers on watch duty.

Presently the surgeon came and extracted the ball, which had lodged near the back-bone, between the fourth and fifth ribs, having gone through the right lung. He said she would die, that she was then sinking slowly from the effect of internal bleeding.

Father Milkem then entered. The dying woman called the surgeon to the bed, and requested him to give her some strong cordial to sustain her for half an hour if possible, for that she had much to say to the priest.

A red morocco case was produced, and a phial with a transparent liquid next appeared; a few drops in water were administered, with directions to take a swallow of the water every time she felt herself growing faint. The surgeon left the room, and soon after the house, having first told the officers the woman would not *live* more than two hours. Before the room was cleared for the

privacy of the confession, the priest, who semed a benevolent man, requested one of the officers to bring a lawyer to prepare a will ; saying, it was the desire of the dying woman. A messenger was dispatched for a *green bag*. The sick-room was then cleared, and Beatrice was left with the man of God, to seek for that consolation in her last hour, which robs death of his sting, and the grave of its victory !

While the confession was progressing, the man of law arrived with the messenger. Soon after, the two officers who had been stationed as a watch upon the house, came in dripping with perspiration, and completely out of breath.

The others saw at once that something had happened touching their duty, and all hands waited very *impatiently* to learn the news.

They related as follows :

At about eight, or half-past eight, o'clock in the evening (it was then about half-past ten), while they were standing at the opposite corner of the street, a man came to the alley gate of the house, paused, looked about, then opened the gate and entered the alley. They immediately crossed to the spot, tried the gate, found it bolted on the inside, were about climbing over, when they heard, a long, shrill, rolling whistle, at the corner of the street in that direction from which the man who entered the gate had come. At the sound of the whistle, they heard a rushing noise in one of the back rooms, and, immediately after, a door slam violently. The next moment, a man rushed from the house, crossed the yard, and mounted the back fence. They then leaped into the alley, and pursued the man over fences and through alleys into a side street, then into Cherry street, thence through Pearl into Vandewater street, where he suddenly disappeared. After searching about and watching for half an hour, they had given up the chase, and were just then returned to their post.

The other officers and Snappy at once concluded that the fugitive must have been Padilla, returned to the house for the pur

pose of securing some valuable papers, or other property, that he might have left there before the death of Beatrice (he never doubted the result of his shot) should be generally known, or her house taken possession of by the officers of the law; and it was equally certain that whatever his intention may have been, they were frustrated by the necessity for flight, at the very moment he had entered the house.

After the lapse of about an hour from the time the sick-room was cleared, the reverend father appeared in the front room, saying that he had received the confession of the dying penitent in the next room, who was now desirous of settling her worldly affairs by making a disposition of what little property she possessed, and for that purpose requested the lawyer, and as many witnesses as were necessary, to approach her bed-side and receive her last will.

The work was speedily ended. She had some three thousand dollars cash in the savings bank at interest, some little jewelry and silver plate, of very old and odd patterns, and the furniture in the house. Of the money, she gave one thousand dollars to Father Milkem and his chapter, to pay for masses for her fast fleeting soul to its eternal home, and all the residue of her property and effects to Rosalie and Henry Summerville, with this one request: That the universal legatees, through their parents or guardians, should amply pay all the expenses incurred by her untimely death (the church being provided for by special legacy); that a plain, square column of grey marble, five feet high, should mark her grave, and bear the following inscription:

"BEATRICE," "BIANCA," "BRAGANZA."

"And all that is of Heavenly Birth,
Oh God, in peace, Restore to Heaven!"

And that once each year, Rosalie (if possible) should visit the grave, and offer a prayer to the father of mercy for her departed spirit. She also requested in the will, that her funeral service might be conducted in strict accordance with the Catholic religion.

The document having been signed by the testator, the witnesses, and the green bag, it was then read aloud by the green bag in the presence of the company, and the dying woman was asked if that was her last will and testament, to which she answered yes, and requested the lawyer to take charge of the document until it could be delivered to the parents or guardians of Henry and Rosalie Summerville, who were appointed executors of the will in behalf of the legatees.

Beatrice then drew two keys, fastened to a string about her neck, from her bosom, handing them to the lawyer, requested him to unlock the top drawer of an old fashioned chest that stood in one corner of the room, to take therefrom a small tin box, fastened with a brass padlock, to unlock it, and place it on the bed before her (she having been bolstered almost to a sitting posture).

The lawyer obeyed, and Beatrice took from the box a pure gold image of the crucifixion, most beautifully wrought, and handing it to officer Hays, whom she recognized as one in authority, requested him to give it to the lady Lucretia with the dying donor's blessing.

The box, which contained various packages of papers, carefully sealed, was then relocked, the keys were handed to the lawyer, and the box to George Snapp, Esq., who, as one of Lucretia's deliverers, was well remembered by Beatrice, and they were requested to deliver the box and keys into the hands of Henry Summerville as soon after her death as possible. Snappy took charge of the box; the lawyer relocked the chest of drawers, and put the keys in his pocket.

The fast sinking Beatrice then requested to be left alone with the priest, as she wished to devote the few moments yet left her in life to prayer. Her wish was immediately complied with, and all the party once more assembled in the front room.

Snappy opened the conversation, which was conducted in an under tone, by saying:

"Well, boys, what do you think of that *will*?"

"Why, *I* think," said Jackson, "that the Summervilles are a lucky family to get such an unexpected lift in the world."

"Well, *I* think," rejoined Snappy without waiting for the opinion of any one else, "that this tin box contains the story of that strange woman's life, and some secrets that would bring in more dollars than there *is* penniesworth in all the other things and money put together, *I* do."

"If I knew any fact or circumstance upon which I could found a fair cause for the preference she has shown for these Summervilles," said the green bag, "I might possibly be able to give an opinion in the premises; but as I know nothing of the Summerville's or of the testator, or what may have been the terms of intimacy existing between them, I would not like to commit myself in any manner by expressing an opinion. I know the money in bank is valuable, and that the furniture in this house *may* turn out to be even more valuable than any of us think for just now."

"Why! you don't mean to say that you think that this here woman what's a dying" (said one of the ordinary runners) "has bin hiden away her dough in old pots and stockins, do you?"

"Ah, my verdant friend," replied the maker and breaker of human wills; "when you have been in as many holes and corners as I have, and have *seen* as much *conscience* as I have spread upon paper fresh from the lips of the dying, you would then begin to know something of these matters."

"Now *I* think," said officer Hays, "that these priests have a *better* chance than you lawyers, to know more of the human heart."

"I think so too," said Snappy; and then they all said they thought so.

But the green bag smiled complacently and said: "You see, gentlemen, you are all greatly in error. Now I will wager my fee in the present case, that her written will, could we only understand it, taking it together with her bequest of that tin box with its contents, and that golden image, would reveal more secrets than the reverend gentleman in the next room will ever get hold of."

"Why, I thought," said Snappy, Esq., "that they told everything at confession."

"Not a whit of it, sir," rejoined the green bag; "they only discuss such matters as are material to the *immaterial* spirit. Offences against both human and divine law of so grave a character as to alarm the dying for their eternal welfare, are the loads that weigh down the soul, and from which it struggles to relieve itself by full confession and very late but vigorous repentance. They have no time to speak of their good deeds, nor is it hardly necessary, for *they* stand out brighter than ever, in the dying hour, and like angels of light and hope, peep into the crime-darkened soul, promising redemption, even at the eleventh hour, to him who, in a spirit of pure penitence, will cast himself down before the throne of grace, and humbly ask for pardon. In these days of sin and selfishness, most all good deeds have their origin in some settled motive. Now only give me a clue to this poor dying creature's motive for making this boy and girl her heirs (except the slice to the church), and I'll write you a romance of *realities*, more thrilling in interest, more chaste in incident, and more substantial in good effect upon the public mind, than all the *exaggerations* of the present day put together. A few words more and I finish. The papers in that tin box," (Snappy clutched the box as if the lawyer intended to steal it) "contain the clue I spoke of; and when the funeral is over I intend to ask permission to peruse them in the presence

of the young gentleman to whom they belong. Don't you think it's a good idea, gentlemen?"

And the gentlemen answered "*Yes!*" Snappy included; for notwithstanding he would have killed any man who might have attempted to even *touch* one of the papers before he delivered them to his young friend Harry Summerville, his imagination had been so heated, and his curiosity so aroused by the old wag of a lawyer, that he was in a perfect fever to deliver the box, that its mysteries might be unveiled to the ravenous appetite of his wonder and credulity

As the lawyer finished speaking, the soft strains of a musical prayer, breathed in the Latin language, stole in upon the front room party, and intensely bound them in the chains of silence. They listened almost without breathing for a few moments, when the strain gently faded away. The spirit of Beatrice had taken its flight from earth.

A moment afterward, the priest entered the front room and told the officers that Beatrice had ceased to suffer, and proposed that the two neighbors and two of the officers should keep watch that night, that the coroner should be summoned to attend early in the morning to pronounce upon the cause of her death—that he would attend early with proper persons to wash and dress the corpse in a becoming manner, and take charge of her burial, until which time he hoped to have the full permission of the officers of the law, to comply with the last wishes of the deceased, relative to the religious ceremonies awarded by the Catholic faith to the dead.

Early next morning, the coroner summoned a jury, who, having heard the testimony, at once rendered a verdict to the effect that Beatrice Lopez (the only name by which she had been known) came to her death by a pistol-shot wound, by the hands of one Pedro Nuñez Padilla; and an hour afterward a warrant issued *against* said Padilla on a charge of willful murder.

The funeral ceremony was performed in strict accordance with the desires expressed by the deceased, the will was probated, and Mrs. Summerville placed in possession without delay. The tin box of papers and the keys were delivered by George Snapp to Henry Summerville, and Mr. Hays in person delivered the golden image to Lucretia.

Great was the rejoicing at the Bremont mansion and the humble home of the Summervilles on that day; and M. Bremont, being determined to relieve the dreadful distress of his New Orleans friends, summoned his travelling collector, a Mr. Flash, to his presence, and said:

"Mr. Flash, you have been engaged in my service for a number of years and I have always found you honorable and speedy in my affairs. (Mr. Flash bowed). I now wish you to undertake the most important mission ever yet intrusted to you. (Mr. Flash smiled and bowed again). Here is a check for one thousand dollars to use if necessary for the journey—but go at once."

"*Where* shall I go?" said Flash.

"Where? why to New Orleans with a letter to our correspondent M. Belleville, to be sure. Now you can be ready in half an hour, by which time I will have the letters prepared. Come for them here, and leave word at the counting-room that I will not be at business to-day. And mark me, Flash, if I did not *know* that you can beat the mail, I would send the letter by post. That's all."

Flash bowed again, smiled, took the check, drew his lips firmly together, said "good morning," and left the house. The whole history of Lucretia's return to her friends, the death of Beatrice and the singular disposition of her property, together with the several requests she had caused to be inserted in her will, were recounted by Bremont and Lucretia in their letters to Belleville and Elise. Flash returned in an hour, announced himself ready (he had a pair of saddlebags on his arm) received the letters from

the hands of Bremont, who said, "*As per address.*" Mr. Flash smiled once more and once more said good morning, and started for New Orleans by the way of Jersey City.

On Lucretia's inquiring of M. Bremont by what route Mr. Flash intended to travel, he replied:

"My dear Lucretia, *that* is a question you and I need not debate, Mr. Flash knows where New Orleans *is*, and his business is simply to get there with the least possible delay."

"But, my kind friend, have you considered that the mail boat does not start till five this afternoon?" (The reader must remember, there was no railroad from Jersey City to Philadelphia in those days.)

"What in the world has an intelligent travelling agent to do with mail lines? Mr. Flash has wit, education, experience, energy, judgment, and a thousand dollars in his pocket; and if I possessed the crown lost by the tenth Charles, I would wager it against the jack boots of Louis Philippe, that Flash will find means to beat the mail at least *one* day, and perhaps two."

The Bremonts and Lucretia went to a late breakfast.

And now we must turn our attention to some other people who have figured in these pages. At the close of the fifteenth chapter, we left Joseph Cheathim going to answer a front-door call from a mysterious stranger, who proved to be no less a personage than the venerable Hagar, Aminadab's antique housekeeper. As Joseph had not the honor of her acquaintance, he was at a loss to guess what could be the nature of the business that brought the decayed daughter of Israel to him; however, he asked her if she would walk in, and she answered:

"No!"

Then Joseph *thought* she might go to Hades, and perhaps he would have taken the opportunity of helping her on the journey by kicking the old lady down the front steps, if he had not stood in some little terror for the result; for a coroner's inquest at his

door, over the body of the damsel (she must have died from the fall) would have been another very bad feature in his affairs, already too much disordered. So he drummed up as much humility to his face as the circumstances would admit of, and said:

"What is your business with me, good woman?"

"To bring you this letter," said Hagar, in clear, firm English, without any of the "*Ole do*" twang, presenting a letter at the same time.

Joseph took the missive, broke the seal, and commenced reading it where he stood, Hagar the meanwhile keeping her piercing, twinkling eyes fixed on his face till he finished it, when she said:

"Will you go?"

"Yes," said Joseph.

"When?" interrogated Hagar.

"To-morrow," rejoined Joseph.

"Good," said Hager; and without any other sign of recognition, she turned her back upon the preacher and hobbled away, leaving Joseph wrapped up in another mystery.

To be sure, the reader will at once guess, the letter came from our old acquaintance Aminadab Florence, then imprisoned at Blackwell's Island. Hagar would not have darkened the door of the Nazarene, to oblige any other man for any amount of money.

By some species of legerdemain, old Hagar, acting under the instructive and *very* suggestive genius of Aminadab, had found out the house in Cherry street, where Padilla *homed* himself when in the city, and the wily Hebrew at once saw that, in all probability, he could purchase his own exemption from punishment, by placing Padilla in the hands of justice. You already know, the Jew hated him, and would never feel perfectly safe until he should be removed from all possible chance of doing mischief.

But much as he hated, he feared Padilla; and although he was fully resolved to bring the Spaniard to justice for the double reason I have already shown, he determined to make the Nazarene apostle the ostensible operator, thereby screening himself from Padilla's vengeance, should he *escape after an attack;* and at the same time to impose a spirit of repentance on the preacher, and secure in him a powerful advocate for his own pardon.

But Aminadab knew nothing of the recovery of Lucretia, or the death of Beatrice, and the perfect knowledge of the police touching the house in Cherry street; so that when he wrote to Joseph, stating simply that he could furnish a direct clue to the capture of Padilla, he was only building up a hopeful dream that was destined to be dissolved by the realities of the morrow.

His letter did not deceive Joseph, but that sinful saint deceived himself, as thus: He knew all about the Cherry street discovery, but he also knew that Padilla was yet at liberty; and in all probability the emissaries of the Jew had discovered his retreat. And as Joseph was not much behind the Jew in quickness of perception and originality of invention, *he* conceived a design of taking advantage of the Jew's information to capture Padilla, deliver him over to the law, and claim the whole merit of the affair to reinstate himself with M. Bremont. As to cheating and deceiving Aminadab, and then deserting him to his fate, why, he regarded it as a duty he owed to Christianity; and when Joseph could by any style of logic reconcile any kind of baseness or villainy with his duty, (?) his sleep was never disturbed by the commission of the enormity. In fact, Joseph's rhetoric made it clear, at least to his own mind, that it was impossible to commit an act of cowardice, brutality, or injustice to any man who was already doing penance for an infraction of public law. And in this frame of mind he had promised to see Aminadab, the letter having demanded an interview.

That same day, Joseph posted to the high sheriff of New

York, and obtained an order for an interview with the prisoner Aminadab Florence. He found no difficulty in obtaining the order, because he went as a minister of the Gospel, and he did not hesitate to tell the sheriff *privately*, that he had good reason to believe the Jew wished to make a confession to him, that would in all human probability be found interesting.

The next day came, and Joseph started early for Blackwell's Island. By the recovery of Lucretia, and the various pieces of evidence gathered from the conversations had with Beatrice before her death, it had become apparent that the Jew was entirely innocent of all participation in the abduction of Lucretia, and that there no longer existed any reason for delaying his sentence under the verdict already obtained against him for burglary; therefore the district attorney entered a *nolle pros.* in the matter of the abduction, and the judge sent an order to the warden of the prison on Blackwell's Island, to send Aminadab to court three days after the date of the order, to receive the sentence of the law.

The high sheriff, when he dispatched an officer with the order, instructed him to direct the prison warden to keep a sharp look-out for the Jew, as all chance for pardon was annihilated by the return of the lady to her friends without his agency.

Joseph reached the prison before the officer; and when Aminadab had been brought from the prison yard into an outer hall-way to confer with Joseph, his heart beat so loudly with hope, that a good listener might have heard it through his ribs and the dirty yellow flannel shirt that covered them.

True to his instincts, the Jew first demanded a promise of the reward (his liberty) before he would disclose anything. Of course, Joseph promised all the Jew demanded without hesitation, and then the Jew told all he knew about the Cherry street house, which was a one-tenth part of what Joseph *already* knew; and when Aminadab finished, one of Joseph's most bland smiles spread itself over his features, displaying all his white teeth as he said:

"And is that all the information you have to give me?"

"Vhy, vhy ish not dat *cood* infummashun? Vot more dosh you vont?"

"Why, you sinful vagabond, do you not know that the lady is recovered, that the Cherry street house is known, and that Padilla is perhaps even now in the hands of the officers?"

The Jew turned deathly pale, while large drops of sweat burst through his skin and he shook in every limb. Then clasping his hands together in an agony of disappointment and terror, he said:

"Holy Moshes! ish it not a shame to shwindle a poor ole man out of hish infummashun! curshes on hish headt and blishters on his toungshs for beatin me *on de blow*."

He wrung his hands, tore his hair, covered his face, wept and stamped by turns, then suddenly starting up to his full height and gazing about him with the stare of a crazy man, he cried out:

"Vare, vare ish dat hag of hell, *Hagar*? She, *she* ish de scoundrel vot is tryin to rob me, *me* who hash feed and given raiment to her for twenty yearsh, and now she vill shteal me all my monish."

At that moment the jailer entered the hall and told Aminadab the old woman had come to see him again; and the next moment the venerable Hagar entered. She had evidently overheard the last paroxysm of Aminadab, and was not in the best humor, consequently. As she advanced in the hall, Aminadab stood gazing at her, his eye-balls rolling about in every direction for an instant, then fixing upon her. His fingers worked spasmodically, as if preparing themselves to fasten on her throat. But Hagar advanced firmly toward him, in spirit at least, if not in gait, until within two feet of the Jew, when she stopped and gazed in his face steadily and silently for a moment; then, with her arm fully extended, her fore-finger pointed at Joseph, and a most lively expression of scorn upon her lips, she said:

"Aminadab, son of the true faith, drive yon Nazarene from the room if you would have *me* speak."

Joseph arose, and taking his hat, said:

"It would be pollution to remain longer in the company of two such unbelieving wretches—infidels, who believe not in the Saviour of man, though the purity and light of his Gospel are open to all who are not willfully blind."

"Begone, thou canting hypocrite, or I'll cast the spittal of contempt and curses upon you. Begone! I say, that old Hagar may breath a purer air; go!"

And Joseph went, for he feared Hagar more than he did Aminadab; and he had no news to gather, therefore a longer stay would be useless.

As soon as the Jew and Jewess were alone, he said:

"Oh, Hagar! Hagar! vhot hash you done—vhot hash you done?—vhy don't you told me of all dish—of de womansh comin back? Oh, cursh de womansh, and *all* de womansh."

And then he raved again, tearing his beard and spitting at imaginary figures in the room. His beard and hair had been totally neglected; his clothing was filthy, exhaling a vicious odor, which rendered him truly offensive. Hagar silently regarded him with a look something like pity; then speaking, said:

"Aminadab, I knew nothing of the Nazarene maiden's return, therefore I could tell you nothing; nor did I know that the abode of your evil genius was discovered until this day. But although I heard you calling me a thief and a robber as I entered here, I *have* entered with the intention of saving you, if you have not yet lost all your courage."

"Oh! shpeak, my angel! Tell the poor old man how—*how* to eshcape from dis home of de Chrishtian dogs. Come, my *goot* Hagar. You vant not to she me losht, do you, Hagar?"

And he whined and leered about the old witch, with so much

abject fawning, that if she had not been moved by some feeling known only to herself, she would have turned from him disgusted. Yes, that's the word—*Hagar* would have been disgusted with Aminadab.

In a few words she told him his only chance was to fly. She then produced sundry highly-tempered saws, files, and chisels, and told him to conceal them quickly, and hide them in his cell. To take the first opportunity of forcing his way to the roof of the prison, from which he could easily descend by the lightning-rod. She also urged him to be quick about it, for he would soon receive his sentence, now that the lady was recovered without his agency. At that moment the jailer called out to know if the "old beauty" was not most through with her visit. She hurried Aminadab off, saying she would come again, if possible, and be faithful to his interest to the last.

Aminadab went to his cell, and Hagar departed on her way to the boat that had brought her to the island; and the moment she reached the prison wharf, she saw an officer of police jump ashore. She immediately recognized him as being one of *three* who had on one occasion searched Aminadab's house for stolen goods.

It occurred to Hagar that this very man was there on the business of Aminadab—come, probably, to carry him to the city for sentence; and she resolved to satisfy her doubts at once. Hagar was right. The officer was indeed he, to whom the order had been given to have Aminadab in court three days thence for sentence. As Hagar approached him he knew her at once, and said, jocosely:

"Ah! my ancient *Sarah*, have you come to take a last embrace of Pappy Abraham, up yonder? Well, you're lucky; for if you had put it off till to-morrow, your last chance would have been lost."

"*I* am a very old woman, and have but a short time to remain

on earth, therefore can be of little service to any one; but if you, sir, will tell me plainly all you know about *him* (she pointed toward the prison), and what they are about to do with him, I will be *your* servant unto death."

The officer regarded her fixedly for an instant; then, with a very curious expression of countenance, said:

"You *seem* to be a very old woman, but you talk with ease and talk *well* too. Now, Hagar, what in the world can you possibly care about that old thief Aminadab? What is he to you? Why, woman, as a true daughter of Israel, you should wish for his death, that you might get at his money-bags and jewel-cases; for I'll be sworn he has plenty, and that you know where 'tis hidden."

"As a true daughter of Israel, I know how to remain faithful to a solemn vow," said Hagar, with a melancholy tone of voice. "However guilty Aminadab may have been, he learnt it not from me. My voice was ever raised to save him from the golden temptations of the Nazarenes, and much have I done to keep him faithful to our ancient laws. But it becomes me not to glorify myself for doing only my duty. Tell me, oh tell me, when is he to receive his sentence? I have been his servant many years, while he has not been an over kind master; and yet from old companionship, I feel for him." (Then, as if soliloquizing, she continued:) "The God of Abraham knows what was *my* duty, and how I have fulfilled my vow."

As she finished speaking, she clasped her hands, her head sunk with humility upon her withered bosom, and tears fell from her downcast eyes. Hagar was weeping.

The officer was really a kind-hearted man, and although he had always believed Hagar to be no better than Aminadab Florence, he was now touched by her unfeigned sorrow. He thought a thousand things. Could it be true that she was a pure, honest woman, after such a long, close association with crime? He

had *heard* of such things, but always believed it to be mere romance. Then the pure, impressive language of Hagar—whose withered and very repulsive appearance would prompt the curious beholder to expect everything from her *but* feeling—impressed him strongly with the belief that the spring and summer of her now wintry life, had been seasons of education and refinement. By what singular vicissitude she had become associated with Aminadab, he was totally unable to divine. He had heard her say she had kept her vow. What vow was it? Probably, if her story were told, every wrinkle upon the skinny face and hands of the Jewess Hagar would wring tears from every heart in pity for her sorrow, and prayers for her happiness beyond the grave He then wondered if he could not get her to tell him something of her past life. He resolved to try.

"Hagar, it looks very strange that you should care so much about your master; I don't think there is another in the world, but you, that would take a single step to save him from the gallows. Ah, Hagar, in what country were you born?"

"You have not answered my questions, but I will answer yours, that you may know how grateful the heart *can* be for so small a kindness. I was born in Spain, upon the domain of the Marquis of Calatrava."

The officer started, and said:

"Did you know Beatrice Lopez?"

"No!"

"Where was Aminadab Florence born?"

"In Vienna!—his mother was a German Jewess of remarkable beauty; his father was a Spaniard."

"And do the Jews and Catholics marry with each other?"

"Holy Abraham forbid," said Hagar. "Aminadab is the child of an unsanctified love, which cost both parents *their lives*, and me a long life of woe and degradation, and the sorrow of this hour."

The officer wondered and wondered, and then he struggled to

identify or rather to connect the life of old Hagar with the papers in the tin box, given by Beatrice to Harry Summerville, but he could not. However, he resolved to give her all the information she desired, in return for the fresh food she had given to the stomach of his curiosity and disordered imagination; for the reader must know the entire police force of New York were wonderfully alive with anxiety about the contents of that tin box. Ever since the old lawyer (whose conversation had been repeated a thousand times) had expressed himself on the subject, the night of Beatrice's death.

"Well, Hagar, to be frank with you, I am come with orders to keep Aminadab in close confinement, that no one shall visit him any more. The stolen lady has been recovered without his help, and he will now be sentenced to the State prison at Sing-Sing for not less than fourteen years, for burglary."

"And when will that sentence be pronounced?"

"He will be brought to the city in three days from this, to receive it."

"And until that time?"—interrogated Hagar.

"He will remain where he is," rejoined the officer.

"God of my fathers! I thank you," said Hagar, with more enthusiasm than the officer thought she possessed.

"And now," continued the Jewess, "with many thanks for your kindness to the poor old loathed Jewess, she blesses you at the moment of her departure."

She extended her long, scraggy hand to him; he took it frankly and said:

"See here, Hagar, there's a heap more about you than most men would expect to find. If I have ever said anything a little rough to you, you must look over it, for you see I found you in rather a bad spot. But I begin to believe in you now, *I* do; and if, when this little business of the Jew's up yonder is over, why, if I can be of any little service to you without treading on

the toes of the *law*, you know, why, drop a little note sealed up, in the office for me, and I'll attend to it. So now good bye."

He shook her kindly by the hand and turned from the wharf toward the prison, while she stood looking after him; and when he disappeared around the angle of the building, she clasped her hands, raising them and her eyes toward heaven, and exclaimed fervently:

"Great Jehovah! how beautiful is thy spirit in man. Thou makest him divine in every land; but form and *education* break down the image of *thy* glory, that circumstantial pride may revel in its place."

The next moment she was being wafted to York Island over the flashing East River, on her way to the city.

The officer delivered his orders to the chief warden, and asked where the cell of Aminadab was situated. The warden at Blackwell's Island was a shrewd fellow, and (notwithstanding he knew all the circumstances under which Aminadab had been sent, and that it was confidently expected he would discover through his emissaries the hiding-place of Padilla, in which event he would be let off with only a slight punishment on the island until a pardon could be obtained) had formed a very unfavorable opinion of his boarder from the moment of his admission in the hotel; and consequently, in order to prevent any *attempt* at an escape—he had located his Hebrew guest in the upper tier of cells in the main prison. The building was strong, built of stone with iron openings, slate roof and copper gutters. The roof was of the sharpest gothic style, and there were four lightning rods extending from as many chimneys, rising from the peak of the roof to the ground

The officer expressed himself favorably to the entire arrangement of the warden, telling him, at the same time, that it would be no more than right to tell the Jew what orders had been sent up there relative to himself, that he might employ the short time *yet left* him for idleness to settle his earthly affairs to his liking—

both parties fully agreeing that such a miserable looking dog would never be able to live out the period of his condemnation. They little knew Aminadab.

The Jew, while this conversation was passing between the functionaries of the law, was most diligently employed in secreting his implements of entrance and exit, in the mattress on which he slept, and had just succeeded to his wish, when his name was loudly called by one of the interior attendants, and he was ordered to attend the warden in the lower hall.

He was seized with a fit of trembling that nearly palsied his limbs, at the order. His first thought was, that they had come for him *then*, and that he would miss the chance of escape, the much abused, yet faithful Hagar had placed in his hands. There was no help for it, he had to go. It was then about eleven o'clock in the morning, and as he crawled along the passage and down the two large flights of steps leading to the first floor of the building, he offered up a prayer to his patron saint (the *beard* of Abraham) that the Philistines would only permit the coming night to pass without removing him. He entered the presence of the warden and policeman (whom he knew) like a bad man walking up to certain death.

"Aminadab," said the warden, "I have received orders from town to withdraw all the privileges you have hitherto enjoyed, such as seeing and conversing with a number of different people whom you employed or pretended to employ for the discovery of Padilla and the abducted lady; the lady has been recovered, and the hiding-place of the Spaniard discovered without your aid. And in order to give you some time to settle any little business affairs you might like to arrange, I now inform you, that in three days hence you will be sent down to court to receive your sentence for the burglary. A *nolle pros.* having been entered in the abduction case, your innocence of *that* villainy has been clearly established; so, if you want pens ink and paper and a little table

to write on, I'll have them sent up to your cell, for I cannot permit you to travel through the halls any more."

The Jew's pulse rose so rapidly at this information that he could hardly conceal his joy. After a moment's silence, having mastered his emotion, he said:

"Many tanks for your kindnish—I have, ash you shay, many bishnesses to settle, and if you will order de schell to be fix at onsh, I vill tank you agin."

"All right, uncle," said the warden, "and I am glad you take it so much like a man. Now be off to your cell, and the things I have promised you shall be there in a moment; and then you will have to stand the lock and key."

Aminadab bowed most servilely and left the apartment. Had the warden been a Richelieu in observation and apprehension, he would have thought the Jew bowed too low. But the warden was not a Richelieu, and Aminadab got off safely to his cell without arousing any suspicion whatever.

He commenced looking through the barred windows, first toward Long Island Sound and then toward the island of New York—his cell being a corner apartment, he had a double view. He then paced up and down the room, settling his plan of escape to his own satisfaction. Then he thought of Hagar, her valuable present and advice. He thought of the roof, and looked at the ceiling of his cell, it was an arch built of brick and cement. He wondered how far above his ceiling the roof was. After all his wondering he settled down upon the resolution to make his way through the ceiling to the roof, and thence by the lightning-rod to his mother earth, just as Hagar had advised. The tools he possessed were sufficient for the undertaking, and for fear the judge might shorten the time allotted him to settle his business, he determined to make the attempt that very night.

His reflections were interrupted by the entrance of a keeper, *first* with a small pine table, and then with ink, pens and paper;

and as he was retiring, Aminadab asked him if he would please to return in half an hour to get one letter that he wished to reach the city before sundown. Then, being once more alone, he seated himself at the table and drew up a full power of attorney with as much skill as an attorney could have done it, appointing *Hagar Frank* his special agent to sell all his effects and grant acquittances; to draw money and money obligations from all banks where he had any deposits; and to do everything necessary to a complete winding up of his business affairs.

He then wrote a long letter to the aged Jewess, in which he simply stated: "I shall take your advish vot you give me in the morning."

He told her where to find money and jewelry that he had concealed, but told her in such a manner that no one else could possibly make out what he was saying, and in the same manner told her where to go and abide till she *heard from him again.* This letter he sealed and directed, and when the keeper returned, he told him that if he sent that letter safely and without any delay, to its direction, he would give him an order for twenty dollars, which would be paid on presentation; but he demanded that the messenger should bring back a note from Hagar, as an evidence that the mission had been faithfully filled.

The keeper promised, the order was written and delivered, and Aminadab was once more alone. The Jew then walked again till he was summoned to dinner, on the ground floor. Then he saw from the gathering clouds that the night would probably be stormy. This raised his spirits a little and took his appetite away. When dinner was finished, he was again marched off to his cell and locked up. The time moved lazily along. He could do nothing till after supper, for until the prisoners were all locked up for the night he would be liable to interruption at any moment. In order to perfect the deception he was then practising, he seated himself and commenced writing letters to several persons in

the city, in such a fashion that the most astute jailer in the world would have been deceived.

At length (a year almost, he thought) he was conducted to supper, and he ate quite heartily. Supper being ended, he was again conducted to the cell and locked up for the night. The distant thunder told him the storm was advancing, and he inwardly thanked Abraham for this little advantage he was gaining.

The tools Hagar had given him were then brought from their hiding-place; the table was placed on the bed, he got upon the table, chisel in hand, and commenced his first lesson in *freemasonry*. He dug away at one particular brick with so much energy, that in half an hour he completely removed it; the morter and fragments all falling on the narrow bed, making no noise whatever.

A brick once removed from the compact arch gave him an immense advantage, for in the course of an hour's more labor he had made a hole through the arched ceiling into the garret, large enough to crawl through. Placing his chisel in his bootleg, he inserted his arms through the aperture, and with the strength of desperation drew his head and shoulders up through it, when a slight circumstance was near resulting as disastrously as his *last* burglary did. Perhaps this last sentence will be objected to, since it implies that Aminadab was at that moment engaged in *another* burglary; thereby raising the question for the green bag fraternity, as to whether or not a man commits burglary by breaking *out* of a house. From the extreme obscurity of the law on this point, I should recommend the enactment of a special statute, never doubting, however, but—as negro-stealing is considered a great virtue by many good Christians in my native State—the statute—if enacted—*when* enacted, would award a high prize to every artist whose genius should be manifested by *complete* success in an operation like that upon which our worthy

friend Aminadab Florence was engaged with so much laudable energy. But to the slight circumstance.

Aminadab had no sooner raised himself half-way through the opening, than a fierce clap of thunder burst immediately over the prison, with such stunning force that it knocked him flat on his face on the garret side of the arch—losing his hold on the rough surface above, to the great risk of falling back into the cell again with the luxury of a broken bone or two. But he recovered himself in time to prevent any accident, and the next moment he entered the garret.

He had no light, nor did he want any, for its rays might have betrayed his operations. The rain poured down in torrents, and the thunder kept up a continual roar above his head. Knowing the roof to be very steep, and that one of the lightning-rods descended from the end chimney, that passed through the passage into which his cell opened, he commenced operations on the slate with his chisel, as near as possible to the lower edge of the roof. He worked boldly, for he well knew the noise would be swallowed up in the roaring of the elements without, and in ten minutes he had removed a sufficient number of slates to creep through.

The rain dashing in his face cooled and refreshed him, giving new energy and strength to go through with his desperate undertaking. He mounted the roof, his feet resting on the gutter, his body flat upon the slates, which seemed to be on fire, so vivid and constant was the lightning.

Lying in this position, for the first time he seemed to take a correct view of his situation. The distance from his foothold to the stony ground beneath was about seventy feet—too great to render a tumble a matter of *moonshine* in the estimation of any man. The Jew thought of the effect produced by his fall from the balcony of Joseph Cheathim. *That* was a *high fall*, and in an instant his bumps of comparison, height and distance, commenced operating on the nervous system, and he found himself as remote

from *terra firma* as though he were seated on the weather-cock of St. Paul's church. This reflection on his badly-disordered fancy brought such an icy coldness to his surface, that the warm rain almost hissed as it fell upon him—at least *he* thought so. His strength entirely failed him; he could not move for some moments.

The storm seemed to increase; the very building shook with the violence of the electric (and, to Aminadab, electrifying) concussions, that momentarily resounded through the sulphurous atmosphere. A fresh terror then seized upon him, and, like a counter-irritant, had the good effect of at least dissolving the lesser pain by its own exquisite torture. He thought, from the trembling of the building, that he was rolling from the roof; and that thought gave him new life. He raised his head a little, but could see nothing; and the very fact that he could not *see* his peril, gave him courage. The lightning only served to make him the more blind.

Resolving to escape, or die in making the effort, he commenced groping with his hands along the slippery roof, moving his feet cautiously in the same direction, until he reached the very edge of the gable, notice of which fact he received by thrusting his hand and one half of his arm over the frightful depth beneath him. The sudden consciousness of this new and very near danger wrung a scream of horror from his agonized bosom that might have been heard at the river bank distinctly, had not a mightier hand than Prospero's moved the elements to terrible and most discordant strife around him.

The next instant his hand rested on the lightning-rod, and hope once more gave him ardor. He grasped the conductor with both hands, and pulled at it as if to try its strength. Lying flat upon his face, he first fastened both feet about the rod, let himself slide down gently until, with one leg below the gutter, he endeavored to measure the length of the curve over the projec-

tion into the wall of the building, but he could not touch it at all. This sent another bolt of ice to his heart, and he had just strength enough to draw himself up again full length upon the rod, as it lay on the steep roof.

Now he was so much exhausted by conflicting emotions that he lay perfectly passive, in a state of relaxation amounting to complete helplessness. The bell on the prison tolled (told) the hour of ten (according to custom, it was chimed every fourth hour to relieve guard and change watches), and Aminadab counted every stroke, while the rain was pitilessly beating upon his uncovered grey head with unabated fury. His heart was sinking beneath the weight of excitement the last four hours had heaped upon him, and for the first time in many years, he felt it was possible for him to die.

Then immediately followed through his mind, in rapid succession, all his bad actions. The murdered marine, in full uniform, appeared to him, and pointed his bayonet at his unguarded breast. He could not banish the apparition. Then old Hagar rose before him, dressed in pure white grave-clothes, looking mournfully upon him, while tears of blood coursed down her withered cheeks, and fell upon him as he lay. At the appearance of this phantom he gave a terrific yell, and it was his last in this life, for a torrent of electric fire fell upon the very conductor he was clinging to, and, in the next instant, Aminadab was a hissing, smoking cinder on his prison roof! And the storm raged, and the prison watchmen still cried, "*All's well!*"

At the moment Aminadab surrendered his immortality to God, cast we our eyes into a second-story room of the pawnbroker's house on the Five Points, and what do we behold?

It is Hagar! She is seated before a little desk, covered with deep crimson cloth, on which a Hebrew Bible lies open. Six candles—three on either side of the open volume, supported by silver branch candlesticks—are burning, and give the brightest

light to the small room, while from a bronze censer of antique fashion, standing on a shelf in one corner of the room, an exhalation of spicy fragrance is borne to the senses on the pale grey vapor that winds gently upward from the vase, gracefully wreathing itself into grotesque images until lost upon the sighing air.

But mark what a change in the costume of the venerable and mysterious Jewess. The black serge has disappeared, and she is robed in white, as nearly in the style of the ancient tribes of Israel as we enlightened (?) people can possibly judge. A deep blue scarf passed from her right shoulder to her left hip, where it was tied in a loose, careless knot. On her head she wears a kind of turban, with a snowy crown, and a deep crimson twisted roll around the brows, opening at the back of the head in two broad fly ends, which are heavily fringed with pure gold. Her left hand lies open on the law given by the great legislator to his people, her right is folded across her bosom; her face and eyes are thrown upward toward the opposite corner of the room, and marks of recent moisture are glistening upon her withered face, the features of which are strongly defined, and doubtless had been classically beautiful in the season of youth. She speaks not, but her lips move as in prayer. How long she has been seated there we may not know, but as the clock on the mantel strikes the quarter hour, her devotions seem to end; for see, she stoops her head forward, and solemnly kisses the sacred book, then rising from her seat, she walks solemuly to an old-fashioned case of drawers, and takes from one of them a letter, and reads it over. It is the one Aminadab sent her that day. See! now she returns the letter, and lifts a locket from its resting-place and kisses it. The face it contains is of a dark, beautiful woman in Spanish costume. Now she returns the miniature, closes the drawer, and taking one of the lighted branches in her hand, slowly leaves the room. And the storm still raged without.

The next morning when the keeper unlocked the door of the

cell lately occupied by Aminadab, called to the prisoner to come down to breakfast and received no answer, he thought that the Jew, having probably been kept awake all night by the storm, was yet sleeping, so he entered the cell to awaken him; but in place of the Jew, he found the table and a pile of brick and mortar, resting upon the couch, and a large hole through the top of the cell; he flew down to the warden, announcing that the Jew had escaped. The alarm bell was rung, a patrol sent all over the island, and the guard-boats ordered to be in readiness, while the chief warden visited the cell to examine and ascertain the *how* Aminadab had succeeded. The warden mounted the chair and drew himself, *à la* Florence, through the hole, saw the opening in the roof, descended at once and said:

"Lightning-rod!"

Then he rushed downstairs, close followed by his deputies. All the inside and outside watchmen were summoned and interrogated, but none of them knew anything about it. Parties started off in search of the Jew, for it was next to impossible that he could have left the island. In about two hours afterward, as one of the parties were returning from the upper shore of the island, to the prison, they saw a black lump that looked as if it might be a man, lying on the roof. A ladder was carried up to the cell, the wardens mounted to the roof through the holes, and the body or rather the ashes of Aminadab were found on the spot where the lightning had overtaken the bad man during the storm.

News of the occurrence were sent to the city, and an order for the coroner to come for the purpose of holding an inquest; and by noon that day, *extras* of the "Herald" and "Sun" contained all the particulars of the attempted escape and death of the notorious burglar Aminadab Florence, pawnbroker in the Five Points; and more than two thousand of the excitement-loving citizens of the Empire City, hastened to the scene of the catastrophe, in the hope of being chosen as one of the coroner's jury.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXPLANATIONS AND RETROSPECTION.

THE murder of Beatrice, her singular will, and the stories that got afloat about the box of papers given to the lad Henry Summerville—the story of the officer about the conversation he had with old Hagar, the sudden and remarkable death of Aminadab, gave life and currency to a thousand and one stories no less wonderful than those related by the Oriental Sultana to her wife-killing husband. The *penny-a-liners* had abundance of occupation, and the *maw* of public curiosity and wonder was crammed to repletion with the pamphlet romances of the period.

Lucretia, happy Lucretia, who was most involuntarily acting the part of heroine in all the mushroom romances that were *pressed* into existence, began to prepare for an immediate return to New Orleans, and her dearest friends. The only circumstance that gave her any uneasiness was, in what manner she could reward Harry and Rosalie Summerville for their instrumentality in her release from the captivity of Padilla. On consulting M. Bremont on the subject, he told her very quietly that the reward offered for her recovery had already been paid to Mrs. Summerville for her children, that the police officers had been amply rewarded for the skill and energy they had displayed in her cause, and that nothing now remained for her to do but to make what disposition she pleased of Mr. Jones, and his friend George Snapp.

"I am already under so many obligations to my kind and affectionate friend and almost father, M. Belleville, and to you sir," said Lucretia, "that—that"——

"That you are fearful we should do too much for you," said Bremont. "But permit me to observe that the wife elect of Henry Viscount Montmorencie, and adopted daughter of my ever faithful friend and *companion* until late years, is entitled to every consideration of her humble servant, true friend and admirer, Louis Bremont."

While he was speaking, Lucretia's eyes were averted, while her heaving bosom and lovely face became rosy with blushes.

"You see," continued Bremont, taking her hand, "I know your secret. While we almost despaired finding you again, Belleville told me everything he knew, but particularly the position you stood in toward that noble gentleman young Monthemar. His father, Belleville and myself were lads at school together, and the friendship of youth and happy hours was only strengthened by time and adversity; so you may be sure the son has large claims on our attention. Should the youngster have returned and found not his darling Lucretia, there is no certainty that he would not have challenged both me and Belleville for our carelessness of your safety." He laughed merrily at the idea, and continued:

"So you will observe that our own lives were at stake as well as yours."

"Do you really believe M. Monthemar could be guilty of any such rashness?" said Lucretia.

"When a gentleman of Monthemar's temperament loves a woman of your worth (more blushes) there is no knowing how many mountains he may run up, or how many precipices he may jump from. But thank Heaven—the Summervilles—your faithful steward (as you call him) and his friend Snapp, your rescue will turn the tide completely in our favor."

"But I am not the affianced bride of M. Monthemar," said Lucretia, with a smile.

"Of course not," rejoined the Frenchman, "only you do not love any one else, you tell him to hope, take a cross from him, and permit him to *pick up pins and needles* at your very feet."

"Elise! dear Elise," exclaimed Lucretia with emotion.

"Indeed, rejoined Bremont, I had the story from M. Belleville himself; Elise did not betray you to me."

"How I long to clasp my sweet sisters to my heart again, to tell them all the suffering forced on me by others, never equalled the torture I endured while thinking of *their* affliction for my mysterious fate."

"Come!" said Bremont, "I'll have no more sad reflections. *I've* possession of you now, and no Padilla in the world will get hold of you again. I suppose the villain is gone, now that he cannot be ignorant of the results of the last few days; besides there's the warrant against him for the murder of Beatrice, in whose house it is very evident he found safety while in the city. I think we have little to fear from him any longer. Now listen to me a moment, young lady, and I will give you a history of some of my doings in your business. I carried the reward to Mrs. Summerville myself two days since. I found her with her son and daughter seated in the neat parlor upstairs in company with William Jones and his inseparable companion George Snapp. When I made my business known, the good woman declared she would not touch a cent of the money, that her little darlings had only done their duty to the distressed, and to claim reward for that, was sinful. And then she urged that the money and movables left to her boy and girl by the unfortunate Beatrice would be ample to complete the education of little Rosalie and take good care of her till she became a woman, that Harry was receiving a good salary for a lad of his age, and *was fully* capable of taking care of himself from that time forth.

The brother and sister then spoke, saying the happiness they felt at the result of their accidental discovery of Madam Lucretia's prison, was all the recompense they wished for; and I really do believe they would have driven me out of the house with the check in my pocket, had not Mr. Jones taken up the argument at that point. Mr. Jones spoke in his own peculiar style as follows:

"'See here now! I would like to have a finger in that pie, and I think it's my dooty to say somethin when I see you're all wrong. Now my opinion is, *you* (to the Summervilles) oughter take the money; for Miss, that is, Madam Lucretia would never be right well with herself jist as long as she'd be thinkin on how little Rose and Harry found her out in that cussed place. I know Madam Lucretia's heart better than any of you, now mind I tell you; and that's one reason why the money oughtent to be refused. The next reason is, *she* aint got nothin to do with it. Mr. Brumont here, offered the reward without askin *her*, and if one of the police had found her out, Mr. Brumont would paid the money to him! cause it's a contract, aint it?' (to me). I answered affirmatively, of course; and then Mr. Snapp spoke as follows:

"'Say! Mrs. Summerville! (to that lady) I think you ought to take the money for three reasons (a sharp jerk of the head); first, because your boy and gal earnt it, as Bill says, accordin to contract; and secont, you see, because I know this gentleman and the lady *want* you to have it; and lastly Mrs. Summerville (looking solemnly at her) I *must* say, though I'm wery *sorry* to say it, if you refuse the reward, it will look very much like the *pomp of pride* (shaking his head), which no *real* downright good Christian ever bears in his heart., (Here Mr. Snapp winked at me, as much as to say, it's all right now.) Young Harry also glanced at me and then at Mr. Snapp as he spoke, and I thought I saw a spark of merriment in his eye, but he said nothing.

"The good mother hesitated a moment, then said, she would

be much grieved if people thought she had any unchristian like pride; then turning to her bright-faced son, she asked him what they could do with the money, whereupon Harry glanced at me, then at Mr. Snapp—from whom he received a knowing wink—and said, 'Buy a little cottage and ground above the village to live in without paying rent; then when Rose becomes a woman she'll have a house of her own to live in.' Bravo! Bravo! shouted Mr. Jones and Mr. Snapp, and I joined them in the cry. Mrs. Summerville yielded, and took the money."

"I am glad of it," said Lucretia, "for the parent and children are worthy of each other. A more lovely girl than Rosalie I never saw, while her brother bears the impress of manhood as nobly and as intelligently as I ever saw in a boy."

"Now comes the finish of my story. It was then agreed," said Bremont, "that I should find a nice little place just out of town, near the Harlem Railroad, so as to enable Harry to return home after sunset from his store. Well I have found the place I think will suit, and I am to take Mrs. Summerville, Rosalie and you to look at it this day, for your approval. Will you go, Lucretia?"

"With pleasure! nothing can give me greater satisfaction than to secure the happiness of that estimable family. At what hour do you start?"

"This very hour if you can be ready!" said Bremont. And Lucretia left the room to prepare herself for the ride, while M. Bremont ordered the coach to be at the door in fifteen minutes.

Since the restoration of Lucretia, Rosalie had been a frequent visitor at the Bremont mansion, and was a favorite with the entire household. Lucretia, in company with M. Bremont, had gone in person to thank Mrs. Summerville for the invaluable services of her son and daughter, and for the kind attention bestowed on her steward, William. Jones whose idea of the care awarded him, was, that he had been sick in Heaven, and nobody but angels to

attend on him. But that single visit showed Lucretia that Mrs. Summerville was an educated woman, with very little worldly experience beyond the circle of her domestic happiness, that she was mild and generous, of a loving disposition, a very fond mother and well calculated to win her children to absolute obedience by the mere gentleness of her manner.

To such a woman, the heart of our heroine turned with all the burning sympathy of her ardent nature. She had listened to the story of Captain Summerville's destruction with his noble ship on the coast of Sumatra, and of the widow's care and anxiety in bringing her two children to their present perfection; and she had smiled through her tears, at the mother's tender anxiety for their future, telling the widow, *such* children should lift a mother's hope above all chance of evil.

To settle, beyond all prospect of want or discomfort, the widow's family, was now one of the first wishes of her heart; and although she was not yet the wife of Monthemar, a little very natural and very pardonable vanity whispered to her soul that her ardent *lover* (for she was forced to admit him in that light at least) would consider *her* restoration to *him* too cheaply purchased at any price in money.

Lucretia was soon ready, when she and Bremont entered the coach, and were driven to the widow's house. Bill and Snappy (the former a little pale yet, but rapidly gaining strength) were seated in the lower front room, smoking meershaum pipes with amber mouth-pieces, presents from Bremont.

Rosalie and her mother were ready dressed, standing at the upper window. As Bremont's coach halted at the door, Bill and Snappy jerked the pipes from their mouths and wiped their lips hastily, as if they had been doing or rather eating something unclean; and by the time the coach was opened the entire family were at the door. Snappy jumped (he did everything by jumps and jerks) to the horses' heads while Bill stood respectfully by

the coach door to hand in Mrs. Summerville and Rosalie, and close the door again. He smiled and bowed as the coach rattled away; his smile was full of happiness, for Lucretia had expressed herself highly gratified at his greatly improved appearance.

The coach rolled along slowly up the Sixth Avenue, allowing the inmates to notice the improvements then just beginning in that section of the now vast city.

"How do you think you will like a residence out of town, madam?" said Bremont to Mrs. Summerville.

"Oh! I am sure to be pleased with it," she replied, "if it's only to gratify Rosalie in her taste for the cultivation of flowers and honeysuckle vines; and it will, I hope, add something to her general health, for I sometimes think she is looking too delicate to stand this rough climate."

Rosalie broke into one of her merriest laughs, and turning to Lucretia, said:

"Now *do* listen to ma! Don't I look like dying? Why, ma, you will make everybody think I've got the consumption. Won't the climate be just as rough *out* of town as *in* town? and how often, ma, do you tell me I must never be proud or vain; and here you are telling company all about my taste for flowers. Why, I don't know anything about them. I love flowers because they are sweet and beautiful, and I would like to learn them if it was only to talk to my mother with nosegays—wouldn't it be delightful?"

The last portion of this speech was addressed to Lucretia, who twined her arm around the delicate form of Rosalie, her face beaming with love and beauty, and said:

"Rosalie, my dear, you shall know the language of flowers."

"Yes! but who will teach me."

"I will," said Lucretia.

"But you are going away soon."

"True!" was the reply; "but cannot you learn from books after a few lessons?"

"I suppose so; but I have no books but grammars, dictionaries, spelling-books, and geographies at home."

"I will get them for you," said Lucretia, smiling.

"Will you! Oh, how much I do love you. I wish you could always live with us—I would be so good to you."

"You must be so to your mother for my sake."

"Oh, ma knows I am good to her already. Ain't I a good girl, ma?"

"Yes, you are very good, but sometimes you talk too freely with strangers."

"There, now," rejoined the girl, "only three days ago when I sat thinking over my lessons (to Lucretia) ma came and kissed me and said: '*What ails you, Rosalie, that I don't hear you singing or laughing?*' and when I said I was only thinking over my lessons, ma told me she was afraid I was sick, or that I had the—the (to her mother)—what was it you said I was getting—*the dumps?*"

Lucretia and Bremont broke into laughter, while Mrs. Summerville sat blushing like a girl of sixteen in company, for the first time in her life.

"I must stipulate against the *dumps* also," said Lucretia, still laughing.

"Oh, my dear Aunt Chreechy," exclaimed Rosalie.

"Oh, Rosalie!" interrupted her mother, "this is positively rudeness," and the good mother turned deathly pale.

"No, no! by no means," quickly interposed Lucretia. "'Twas I who made her promise to call me so while I remained in the city."

What a weight this little sentence removed from Mrs. Summerville's heart. Then Rosalie said to her:

"Ma! how *could* you think your little Rosalie was naughty

enough to speak so if the lady had not taught me to? Now just for that, I'll tell what you said four or five months ago, when Mr. Bremont called me a *beautiful little girl.*"

"Rosy! Rosy!" said the mother quickly, and blushing again like a girl, "you must not expose my weakness, my dear."

"Yes, tell us, Rose," said M. Bremont, laughing, "we want to hear it."

Rosalie gave a loud *hem*, and looked with concentrated mischief at her mother, who, not daring to contradict M. Bremont, sank back in the coach all confusion, and Rosalie said:

"Well, you must know I was standing on the front steps when Mr. Bremont came along, but we did not know him then, and so he asked me my name and my mother's name, and some more questions which I don't recollect; and then he felt my hair and said I was a beautiful little girl, and then he went away. Well, so ma heard only the last part of what he said, and when I came in the house ma took me right on her lap and began to tell me about the wickedness of men, and that they always begun their wickedness by telling little girls just beginning to grow up that they were handsome, and that they only said so to make them proud and vain, and to think too much of themselves, and to wish for fine dresses, and ear-rings, and bracelets like the rich ladies wear."

"Stop, dear!" said Mrs. Summerville.

"No, no, Rose! go on; we want to hear it all," said Bremont, laughing heartily at the girl's innocent retaliation on her mother for the suspicion of having been *naughty.*

"Well," continued Rose, "then ma told me I was *not* beautiful and handsome, but that I had a very plain, common face, and that all people who told me I was pretty were only trying to make a fool of me; that I should never listen to such people, but run away to my lessons, and try to forget what had been said to me But that ain't all."

"Go on," said Bremont, who enjoyed the scene heartily.

"Well," continued the little sylph, "I believed just what ma told me, that I had a common, plain face." Here Bremont interrupted her, asking if she never looked in a mirror.

"Oh, yes," continued Rose; "but I never think of looking at my face then."

"At what do you look?" interrogated Bremont, roaring with laughter.

"I look to see if my hair is smooth on the top of my head, and to see if I have put on my frock right, or if my vandyke sits neatly around my neck, that's all."

This was too much even for Mrs. Summerville to preserve her gravity over, and she joined the chorus of laughter with all her heart. Rose, in her ardor, was standing on the floor of the coach, holding on to Lucretia; her face was radiant with joyful animation as she looked from one to the other, not *exactly* understanding the cause of their glee; and she proceeded:

"Well, I believed all ma told me, of *course;* so, a long time after that, when Mr. Jones came home half crazy, and told us you [to Lucretia] were stolen away, ma began to cry and wring her hands, and said she was very sorry for the unfortunate lady, and for poor Mr. Jones too, and then she took me in her arms and hugged me so tight I couldn't move. And when I asked her what was the reason she cried so and held me so tight, she told she was fearful that somebody would steal me, *too.*"

Bremont and Lucretia glanced at each other, and Rosalie proceeded as soon as she had taken breath.

"Well, said I: 'Why, ma, what would anybody steal me for? I am no great, beautiful lady!' And now, what do you [to Bremont] think ma said to that? Why, she said her darling Rosalie was beautiful enough to tempt a great many men to steal her! Only just think, calling me beautiful after telling me I had a plain face!"

Lucretia saw that the mother's fondness had betrayed her to the precocious mind and wit of her noble little daughter, and in the most delicate manner came to Mrs. Summerville's relief, as follows:

"I suppose, Miss Rosalie, that you know what your mother intended, when *she* called you beautiful?"

"Oh dear, yes! she *intended* to speak the truth—ma always does."

This was too much for the kind-hearted Bremont, and he fairly shook again with merriment. The mother and Lucretia both smiled, the former sadly, the other with unfeigned delight at Rosalie's quickness.

"Admitting, Miss Rosalie," answered Lucretia, "that your mother was speaking truth, how do you know that she applied the term *beautiful* to your face or figure? Is there no other beauty that an affectionate mother can see about her child?"

"Yes, yes, Aunt Chreechy; there is beauty of heart, beauty of mind, of disposition, and temper."

"Then, is it not possible your mother referred to these when she called you beautiful?"

"No, I think not!" said Rosalie; "because if I have got any of these, no one knows it but ma; and men don't steal people for beauties they can't see."

Lucretia kissed her, by way of settling the dispute, and Bremont remarked, he thought it was the best compromise she could make. Rosalie, having the fullest confidence in her mother's judgment, firmly believed herself to be a beautiful girl. And she was right.

The coach now drew up by a low fence covered by an aspiring hedge of sweetbrier and wild-roses in full bloom. The party alighted, passed through the wicket-gate, and found themselves in a beautiful garden of fruits and flowers. Inside the fences stood rows of red, white, and black currants, and gooseberries

The garden was about two acres square, extending from the road back to the handsome stone cottage-house that stood on the rising ground, behind which lay six more acres, which were devoted to vegetables, pasture, and orchard—the orchard being planted through the pasturage, occupied four acres, and the remaining two were devoted to kitchen vegetables and melons.

The portion in front of the house, designated as the garden, was truly beautiful. Every variety of flowering shrub and plant was there, set out with pure taste; while at graceful distances from each other, stood a few fruit-trees of the first quality. All the flowers of the season were in bloom, and the ripening fruit hung in luxuriant clusters upon each tree and shrub. Nature was smiling here most bounteously.

As they entered the place, Rosalie sprang forward like a fawn, clapped her hands, and manifested all the delight her ardent nature was susceptible of, under the influence of this fairy change from the very unromantic regions of McDougal street, to such a paradise.

The grounds were traversed by the party, and everything was under good cultivation. There were seven head of horned cattle for dairy use, and two goats of the fine Maltese breed. There were about two dozen white, snub-nose, short-legged Berkshire pigs, and three horses on the place, and for sale with the property. There was a well of splendid water near the kitchen door, and at the extreme rear of the ground a brook of sweet water went gurgling along, inviting the stock to its cool bosom for refreshment.

The cottage—of brown stone—was one story and a half high, having two large rooms and two cabinets downstairs, divided by an ample hall from the front to the back door, and four fine rooms upstairs for sleeping apartments. There was a broad gallery extending the whole front length of the house. There was a kitchen and out-houses standing in a line extending back from

the rear of the main house, which gave the whole building the form of an L, the front being its base.

There were an old negro man and his wife left in charge of the premises until a purchaser was found. From these people Bremont learned that a similar establishment was situated immediately opposite, and had been recently purchased by a lady, whose family consisted of herself, her husband, who was an idiot caused by sickness; a cook, house-maid, waiting-maid, and a gardener; and the name of the new proprietor was Hawthorne; they had moved up from the city only a short time since.

After a full examination of the premises, all parties being fully satisfied, it was agreed that M. Bremont should close the purchase the next day in the name of Henry and Rosalie, through the agency of their natural tutrix and guardian; Harry having told his mother and sister, any place that was charming to them would be lovely to him. The party then reëntered the coach and were entertained by Rosalie, who gave a full description of the improvements she would make as soon as they were in possession, until they arrived home.

M. Bremont having left at their home the Summervilles, and Lucretia safely housed with his own family, proceeded down to Nassau street, where the real estate broker had an office, closed the bargain for the ten-acre lot and cottage, deliverable on signing of the deeds, which was done the next day. Mrs. Summerville only having hired the house in McDougal street by the quarter, and the two first months of the quarter—May and June—having nearly expired, M. Bremont told her, at the instance of Harry and Rosalie, she had better pay the rent for July at once and move to her own home that the young people might have the benefit of a full summer; for Harry was to have a holiday through all of July and August, it being the first one given to him during his three years' good service in the store where he was a clerk.

As soon as the purchase was closed, Lucretia sent for Bill, who had been most liberally supplied with money by M. Bremont, and requested him to secure the services of his friend Snapp and help the Summervilles to settle in their new home, and take up his quarters there until further notice. As Bill considered himself part of the goods and chattels of Lucretia, he was most happy to obey. Besides, this new order looked very much like a continuance of his engagement, and his spirits rose accordingly.

In the course of another week, or by the first of July, *Summerville Cottage* was fully and most tastefully furnished and peopled, a beautiful little library having been added to the household treasures, of which the floral dictionary made a part. A first-rate gardener had been employed, a dairymaid and housemaid duly installed—the interest of the money left by Beatrice being ample to pay their wages and support the family—M. Bremont acting as Mrs. Summerville's agent.

The nation's birthday—the glorious Fourth of July, followed a few days after the installation at *Summerville Cottage*, and on that day the Summerville family visited Madam Hawthorne, their opposite cottage neighbor.

Gratifying letters were received from New Orleans—*Flash*, the messenger of M. Bremont, had gone through with the greatest possible speed, and the intelligence he bore to the afflicted family of M. Belleville, had been the means of discontinuing the visits of the doctor. Elise and Margaret regained their spirits as if by enchantment, and "the worm that had so long been feeding on the damask of their cheeks," perished, the moment intelligence of Lucretia's safe return to her friends was announced.

If we place full reliance on the letters M. Belleville sent to New York, his *little mischief* was almost mad with joy, and played more tricks upon him, Margaret and poor Nanny, than she had ever done before. She dressed up Lucretia's portrait with flowers, and fastened the diamond tiara around the brows of the

painted bust and then called it an impudent good-for-nothing, and shaking her little fist at the smiling face, she madestly requested it to wait till its *real* head of hair arrived, when she would pull it all about *its* ears. She made Nanny drink a whole tumbler of Burgundy after dinner, to her mistress's good health; and Nanny, who was perfectly willing to drink poison so it was, intended for the good health of Lucretia, swallowed the dose, and in five minutes afterward was carried to bed under the most perfect influence of *spiritual communication.*

The letters written by Elise to Lucretia, although very handsomely executed, were little more intelligible than if they had been written in Chinese characters. I'll give you a small sample:

. . . Now dear, *dear!* Chreechy, what is the use of staying any longer in that horrid New York? You monster you—just wait, that's all—just wait till I get hold of you again. We'll see who's mistress—saucy jade, you had no business to go at all, and I was a fool to permit it—and I am so sick, too, and no one to pet me and kiss me like you—darling—with your soothing smiles and caresses. Yes, I like to have died too, and then you would not have had me any more to impose upon—you don't love me—you don't, I know you don't; I ought to have died to just spite you, saucy hussy. Oh! dear Chreechy, I have such news for you. but I won't tell you, I won't—yes I will sweetheart, it will be so good. Meg's got a beau, a real beau with whiskers on his chin—he's such a nice fellow—and do you believe it, Meg's jealous of me, while the poor lad is dying for her. But it's all your fault, Miss Impudence. If you had not made me sick he would have talked more to Meg than to me. *Why, he confesses it to me!* to be sure he tells me he loves my sister and actually wants me to court Meg for him. Pa says—no, not pa, yes, it was too!—pa says Meg will frighten him off with her sober looks. She *does* look sober, dear Chreechy; but who made her look so I should like to know? Oh, but won't I pound you miss, when I get hold of you again?

But tell me, dear, when *are* you coming to me? You will have been back in the world ten or twelve days when you get this, and it's so long since you have had your pretty little hands in my hair, and you know how much I like you to play with me. Besides, ten days is quite long enough, *miss, for* you to be *gadding* about by yourself in such a place as New York.

Here comes pa for the letter and I am not half done. Do come quick, dear Chreechy, or you won't find anything but the skin and bones of your affectionate and—I promise to be always—your most dutiful little angel,

ELISE.

Now, for a letter of congratulation, this was certainly the most remarkable one I ever saw; but then Elise Belleville wrote it, and she never did anything like anybody else.

While Lucretia was reading the letter, she laughed all the time, yet all the time tears ran rapidly down her cheeks, filling the (quite original) missive with blisters and blots. And when she had finished, it was carefully folded and placed in her bosom, while the fullness of her joyful heart escaped in inarticulate murmurs upon her quivering lips. Lucretia was a glorious woman.

M. Belleville sent her a letter he had received from Henry Monthemar, directed simply *Lucretia*. It had never been sealed, but sent under cover to M. Belleville. Young Monthemar appeared to have no secrets about his love-making, for he evidently cared nothing whether the whole community saw *his* letter or not. His style, you will perceive, is slightly different from that of Elise, but his letter will be found equally refreshing.

PARIS, *April* 18, ——.

Upon my honor, Lucretia, I could not fix upon a single short sentence as a beginning to my letter. Were you a large public meeting, I should have said, *fellow countrymen;* if a chamber of deputies, my opening would have been equally clear; but being *Lucretia*, the novelty of my situation actually suspends the power of expression, and I am forced to *commence without a beginning.* I am quite certain, at this moment, that I never have loved any one but you, because I never before entertained any doubt of rendering myself perfectly agreeable; and you may be sure my present doubt is parented by an honest desire to appear to you more desirable than any other man. While I was with you, my vanity did much to sustain me; but now that I am alone, and have ample opportunity of contrasting my demerits with your excellence—without any other reason—I grow fearful of a more successful rival. On my soul, I am not jealous of you!

but the poor opinion—from a comparison with you—I now entertain of myself, will keep me miserable until I am once more by your side.

M. Belleville's last letter to me is dated in the first days of March, and although he assures me you are well and happy, there is an ambiguity in his style that I find rather perplexing. I have too much faith in your discriminating judgment to believe it possible that any evil which may have befallen you, through *your* instrumentality would be concealed from me. What moves my much esteemed friend from his usual clear, frank manner? Is he plaguing me, or have you really been unwell? If I am so fortunate as to receive a direct reply to my letter, I feel that I will be made fully acquainted with all that I ought to know. There is *nothing* wrong! I feel it—I am confident of it.

A few weeks more of *business* (oh, that a man who loves a woman as I love you, should be compelled to do any business until the great question of his life should be settled), and then, Lucretia, I will come to gather the fruit of the hope you planted ere we parted. If *I* am bold, *we* have conspired against Harry Monthemar to make him so. I cannot die a bachelor, because I promised my father to marry; and I am sure you would not counsel me to marry a woman I do not love—would you? Of course not. And you *know*, Lucretia, I love only you. If you don't take me, I will die single, thereby doing violence to a sacred promise to my father, you being accessory to my crime of disobedience. I do not believe you could be guilty of even so small a crime. You cannot plead ignorance of my position *now*, so nothing but an overt act of sin on your part can possibly save you from me and the priest when I return. Look boldly at the question, my Lucretia. Consider what a splendid triumph it will be for you to accomplish that which no king can do—*make one man the happiest in the whole world.* I am that very man—that is, I *will be* as soon as *we* are married to each other.

That question being fully settled, I leave it entirely to you to point out what travels we shall undertake, what companions we shall have, how long we shall remain abroad, and what place we shall fix on for our home. Our home! What a beautiful sentence it is, Lucretia. All the brilliant glories of life—the triumph of ambition—the boisterous plaudits of the multitude—grow dim and valueless when compared to the light and love of a pure domestic home. Time only strengthens its affections and associations. Should we prove recreant to our early household gods, there are lisping voices to charm us back to duty. And when the wintry

season of even a well spent life creeps in upon us, there are our images of early love and life, returning tenfold blessings for each faded hour of care. *You* shall select our home.

Oh, how heavily the time begins to hang upon me. Since I commenced this letter, I begin to feel the impossibility of remaining another day in France. Lucretia, I do really believe I would die were I to lose you. I—I must stop, or I shall be betrayed into some nonsensical, extravagant expression, that would make you ashamed of my weakness. I love you, Lucretia, if woman was ever loved. If you design answering this, not a day must be lost, as I shall leave France early in July, for the United States, and with the fixed purpose of creating a domestic Republic by means of an ecclesiastical union of two *other states* into one.

A toi pour toujours,

HARRY MONTHEMAR.

When Lucretia had finished reading Monthemar's letter, she carefully folded the paper, and was about to place it in a private drawer, when, looking cautiously about the room, and being satisfied she was entirely alone, she kissed the letter, and locked it up with the rest of her treasures.

It must be observed that Monthemar's letter was dated in April, and not knowing Lucretia was in New York, he had sent it to the care of M. Belleville, in New Orleans; and as there were no steamers yet crossing the Atlantic, she did not receive it until after the fourth of July. And as Monthemar had said he would leave France in the early part of July, he was, at the moment Lucretia received the letter, probably on his way, or on the eve of starting; therefore she concluded not to answer it.

Our absent and neglected characters, and what they have been doing during the time occupied by the last few chapters, in whole or in part, need some notice, and we will turn our attention to them at once.

The last we saw of old Hagar, was at her devotions in the house on the Five Points, on the night of Aminadab's attempted escape and death.

On the following day she received the news with calmness. Under the face of the authority Aminadab had delegated to her on the day of his escape from prison and life, Hagar took possession of the establishment and all the other effects of Aminadab, sold out his stock at auction, and left the city—none knew whither.

Rachael Hawthorne—as she had intimated to Joseph in her last interview with him, at the conclusion of the fifteenth chapter—had purchased a ten-acre lot, with a cottage house on it, and had removed, with her imbecile husband, to her new home, retaining only such domestics as were necessary for the household service. And it had so happened that M. Bremont had purchased for the Summervilles a ten-acre lot and cottage almost opposite, so that the two cottages were not more than five acres from each other, while the front line of each property rested on the same avenue or public road.

We have seen, that on the fourth of July, Mrs. Summerville, with her son and daughter, had made a visit to the Hawthorne cottage, where they were received with all the kindness and affability Rachael so well knew how to display. In the course of conversation—while Harry and Rosalie were inspecting the garden, with the view of taking advantage of any superior taste they might find displayed there, over their own little paradise—Rachael learned from the innocent Mrs. Summerville the whole particulars of the abduction of Lucretia, the death of Beatrice and Aminadab, the part her darling children had played in the escape of the lady, the mysterious manner in which the dressing-case and its contents had been restored to M. Bremont by an unknown lady, and what a bad man Joseph Cheathim was supposed to be.

During Mrs. Summerville's relation, Rachael exhibited so much interest, that the other smilingly inquired if she knew any of the parties whose names had been mentioned, to which Rachael answered that only one of them was personally known to her, and

that was the minister, Mr. Cheathim. She then expressed herself highly pleased with the turn affairs had taken, and trusted the lady—Lucretia—would soon be in possession of the truth touching her birth and parentage.

Mrs. Summerville said there was little doubt of such a result, since a secret drawer in the dressing-case had been left partially opened by the mysterious lady who sent it, in which M. Bremont found a kind of a confession or statement, in the hand-writing of Padilla, stating who the parents of Lucretia were, or some facts and circumstances that led directly to such knowledge; and as the lady was soon to return to New Orleans, to her guardian, she presumed proper steps would be immediately taken to achieve her identification. Then changing the subject suddenly, she continued:

"You have a charming place here, Mrs. Hawthorne, and believe me when I say I am really charmed with your society. As I am, and have ever been fond of my home and the company of my dear children, I shall, if agreeable to you, endeavor to cultivate a closer intimacy with you for the simple purpose of extending my little family circle, as it were, within the influence of your graceful sociability."

"Nothing will afford me greater pleasure than an interchange of friendly visits with you, madam, and your amiable children; but I fear you will find me but a dull companion, devoted as I am to the care and comfort to my afflicted husband." She colored slightly.

"Indeed, Mrs. Hawthorne, I abstained from touching the subject of your domestic afflictions, not from any want of consideration, but because I feared giving you pain. Since you have mentioned it, you will not be offended when I tell you, that from the works of God I always find great good resulting. In my case, when Captain Summerville—my dear husband—was destroyed with his ship, I suffered very much; but when time had softened

my affliction, I turned with stronger interest to my children, while they have become so wedded to their mother, they will never leave me during life. It has pleased Heaven to afflict your husband on earth, as the price, perhaps, for the salvation of his immortal spirit, or it may be, for the redemption of some other soul, whose progress in evil may have been arrested by this dreadful evidence of God's power. Hundreds who have known him perfect in reason, can never think of him now without seriously reflecting and whispering to the heart, *We know not what an hour may bring forth.*"

During this speech, Rachael's hands were clasped upon her bosom, her face was pale, her eyes elevated and suffused with tears, while her lips moved as in murmuring prayer. Mrs. Summerville did not notice the emotion of Rachael, for while speaking her eyes were cast down. But when she had finished, and, raising her eyes, saw how deeply moved Rachael was, she went to the sofa, on which the sorrow-stricken, truly repentant wife was seated, and gently taking her hand, said:

"Do not give too much rein to your sorrow, madam, but let your suffering soul find a sweet consolation in the sincerity of your devotions, and the remembrance of the virtue and purity of that love which lighted your hearts in happier days. Come, dear lady, let us walk upon the little lawn; the fragrant air will revive you, and (with a saint-like smile) we will see what my little ones are doing. Come with me."

What exquisite misery had not Rachael endured in the last few moments! She prayed for strength to endure the severity of her chastisement, that she might be blessed with life, long enough for the full and perfect expiation of her crime. The thought then flashed through her mind, that did the pure creature beside her know the wife had reduced the husband to his living death, she would fly from her with loathing and abhorrence. But the justice of Heaven did not demand such crushing ven-

geance ; and the words of comfort that continued to flow from the widow, banished the remorseful woman's fears.

Rachael dried the tears from her eyes, laid her arm lovingly around the neck of Mrs. Summerville, and with an expression of resignation and gratitude that went to the widow's heart, walked forth upon the lawn.

As they left the gallery of the cottage, Rosalie came bounding toward them, with one hand full of roses and the other with large black cherries, exclaiming :

"See, ma, how beautiful these are. The old gardener said I must save the stones and plant them ; and that by the time I am a woman I will have plenty in my own garden."

Before any one had time to reply to Rosalie, Harry came up, out of breath from chasing his fleet sister. He carried a bunch of white and purple violets which he handed to his mother, saying :

"Take these, mother, they are so fragrant, the sun has never touched them."

"Children, I fear you are trespassing too extensively."

"By no means," said Mrs. Hawthorne, "I am charmed to see them so happy ; and I now promise Rosalie to help her cultivate and train all the fine fruits, vines, and flowers that I have, so *her* garden and mine shall in a few seasons look precisely alike."

"Oh, will you though ? *Do* let me call you Aunt Rachael !"

"Why, Rose, my dear, how forward you are," said Mrs. Summerville.

"Where's the harm, mother ? If Mrs. Hawthorne is not offended, I am sure Rose should not be scolded," said Harry.

"I know that, Harry ; but how do you know Mrs. Hawthorne is not offended ?"

"No one can be angry with such a handsome smile," said Harry, looking at Rachael. "Besides, Rose is nothing but a little bunch of love—kiss me, Rose—and no one with a good heart

can ever be angry with her. Kiss me once for Fourth of July, Rose." She flung both arms about her brother's neck, forgetting that both her hands were loaded, and in drawing his face to hers, for the purpose of giving him the Fourth of July kiss, she smashed the whole handful of large black cherries upon his cheek, sending the deep rich-colored juice all over his face, neck, and the broad, white collar of his shirt. The party could not refrain from laughing, Harry louder than any one else, and he only made it worse by his efforts to wipe it off with a white pocket handkerchief.

After a stroll about the garden, the trees giving shade enough to make it pleasant, the Summervilles took their leave, after exacting a promise from Rachael to come over in the evening to see the display of fire-works that Mr. Jones and Mr. Snapp had resolved on, in honor of the day.

In the meantime, Lucretia had notified Rankin of her intention of returning to New Orleans by the latter part of July, and to hold himself in readiness to start on a short notice; it being her intention to take him back again for the double purpose of withdrawing him from his old associates, and of rewarding him for his honest services, from the purse of her self-styled guardian, M. Belleville.

These orders had elated Bill exceedingly, and on communicating the joyful (to him) intelligence to the Summervilles and George Nippers, he had expressed his determination to have a regular blow-out on the Fourth. Accordingly, he had caused to be prepared a number of rockets, bengola lights, wheels, serpents, and other pyrotechnic monsters, for the glorious occasion, and took several lessons from the fire-works artiste, relative to the manner in which they were to be let off.

The evening came. The night was as beautiful as ever a summer sunset, in a northern clime, let fall upon the fruits and flowers of July. Great labor had been expended by the entire household

in the adornment of the cottage and grounds for the occasion, because Lucretia and M. Bremont had promised the widow to pass the evening at the cottage ; and now that Mrs. Hawthorne was to make one of the party, everything bid fair for a highly intellectual reunion.

The walks through the garden had been thoroughly cleaned, the bushes trimmed, the soft ground around the flowers newly raked up to give it a fresh appearance, the main trunks of the fruit-trees had been whitewashed, all the rooms in the house were adorned with flowers, and a splendid light supper of all the delicacies of the season was set out in the large hall running through the centre of the house.

Bill had fixed on an oval-grass plot in front of the cottage for his pyrotechnic display, because there were no trees or flowers growing in it, while it was bordered by a gravel walk not less than twelve feet wide, and sufficiently far from the cottage to prevent all chance of mischief from fire.

The first visitor was Rachael, attended by her maid, a messenger boy and the old gardener, who had been expressly invited by Rosalie for his many kindnesses to her. But before she had time to examine the great display made by the Summervilles, the carriage of M. Bremont drove up to the front gate, and that gentleman, his daughter Clarisse and Lucretia, alighted. While they were being welcomed and ushered into the house, Bill and Snappy mounted—one with the coachman and the other with the old porter—and conducted the coach through the side lane to the stable. Now, these two worthies—that is, the coachman and porter—were well acquainted with Bill and Snappy from having seen them frequently in the house of M. Bremont, and from knowing the relation in which Bill stood toward Lucretia. Besides, they had both been very civil to our friends, and had opened several bottles of fine sherry for their exclusive benefit at the Bremont mansion ; and Rankin not being a man to forget a kindness,

resolved (notwithstanding they were Frenchmen), to give them a full return for past civilities.

M. Bremont and Mrs. Summerville walked up the pathway a head, Lucretia and Clarisse followed, having Rosalie by either hand between them, and Harry brought up the rear. Rachael's heart was throbbing with anxiety as they approached the house, lest she should be discovered. Clarisse was the person she had spoken to on the occasion of bringing the box to Bremont's house, and although she was then heavily veiled, she dreaded a discovery. Had she known they were to be present she would have excused herself from coming.

They entered the cottage, and the widow presented them singly to Mrs. Hawthorne, her nearest neighbor. The greeting was warm and graceful on the part of Lucretia and the Bremonts, graceful and retiring on the part of Rachael. The conversation soon became general and animated. The Declaration of Independence; the great spirits of seventy-six; the results to mankind *from* the Declaration, were at first the theme; then the season, the day, the evening, the cottage, the garden, the elegant arrangement of the supper-table, and last, though not least, William Jones, his fidelity, his courage and his coming exhibition of fireworks, all, all, came in for a good share of favorable notice.

Rachael, on finding that she was entirely unsuspected, and being pressed by Rosalie, suffered herself to be led to a seat beside Lucretia, in order (as Rosalie said) that her two new aunts might become in love with each other before supper-time. Of course it was not long before all the worth of Lucretia was fully established in the mind of Rachael, whose quick discernment at once discovered the glorious spirit, chastened by adversity and sustained by noble truth and honor.

Suddenly a report was heard from the discharging of a home-made cannon, manufactured for the occasion out of the barrel of an old musket, which Bill and Snappy had caused to be sawed

off about eighteen inches above the touch-hole, and then mounted on a carriage manufactured out of a log of hickory wood.

Our patriotic engineers had loaded their piece to the muzzle, placed a slow match on the priming and fired the train, after getting at a safe distance from the hastily-constructed engine. The report was tremendous, and entirely unsuspected by all except Rosalie and Harry, with whom it was the concerted signal for the fire-works to begin.

Rose leaped out in the centre of the room, clapping her hands, exclaiming in an ecstasy of delight :

"Hurra ! hurra ! for the fire-works ! Come ! come everybody—come out on the front gallery—quick !"

And she laid hold of Clarisse Bremont, the nearest object to her, and fairly pulled her out of the airy parlor, to the merriment of every one except the widow, who said she was afraid her *little dear* was going crazy.

The party was soon assembled in front, when, by way of opening the exhibition, the stems of half a dozen large rockets were fired at once, and their roaring, fiery passage high in the air, drew another shout from Rosalie, who screamed at the top of her voice :

"Hurra ! for the Fourth of July."

But when the rockets exploded, sending forth a thousand stars of variegated, brilliant colors, there was a general expression of admiration. The next thing in order was a vertical wheel of variegated fires, with a flaming sun as a centre. Then followed Bengola lights; then more wheels, rockets, and Roman candles; and then a vast number of fiery serpents were turned loose upon the air, hissing, twisting, and bursting in every direction.

This, Rosalie said, was the signal for the closing piece of the exhibition, which was to consist of a lot of fiery pigeons rushing from one tree to another on wires which had been stretched for the purpose.

In order to prevent accident, the artists had converted an old trunk, without a lid, into an ammunition wagon. It contained about a half a pound of dry gunpowder for the use of their cannon, a large number of surplus quick stems, bundels of blue lights, Chinese crackers in abundance, wadding, etc. The chest was covered with a canvas first, and then a small old mattress on the top of that again, to preclude the possibility of ignition.

This ammunition wagon was placed in one of the broad pathways, and Snappy, like a true powder-monkey, sat upon his chest every time it was closed. Bill acted as gunner, and all things being ready, he lighted a fuse and fired the pigeon train, and away they flew from point to point, like miniature comets with very long tails. As this last piece would occupy about three minutes, Bill seated himself beside Snappy to admire the effect, which was very beautiful.

When the last pigeon expired with a sharp crack, an extraordinary and very unexpected addenda was made to the performances of the night, by the violent explosion of the ammunition chest, which threw Bill and Snappy on all fours upon the green, pursued by a perfect volcano of fiery projectiles, whose variegated flames cast a very sinister light upon the finale of the exhibition. Bill gathered himself up and remarked:

"By thunder, Snappy, if the whole cussed chist haint blowd up!"

"I should rather think so," replied Georgy. "But are you hurt, ole feller?"

"I don't know yet," said Bill, examining himself, "but I feel a little heavy about the hips."

By this time the company, including the two French servants, came up, or rather down, and were soon relieved of their terrors by an acknowledgment on the part of the engineers that they were entirely unhurt, although slightly agitated.

The cause of the grand feature of the evening is very easily

explained. In taking some blue lights from the chest, Bill had dragged out one end of a powder quick stem, which being unobserved by Snappy when he closed the chest, had been left hanging on the ground. A single spark had fallen on the stem, and the *blow-out* at Summerville cottage ended with a *blow-up* of the projectors.

And thus passed the anniversary of American independence at the Summerville cottage. The Bremonts and Lucretia were charmed by Rachael, and *she* thought Lucretia a divinity.

It was late in the evening when the supper was over. The Bremonts and Lucretia left the cottage after a most cordial parting with the Summervilles, and Rachael, who, for the first time since her self-condemnation, had been made to feel that the sincerity of her repentance was acknowledged in heaven, and that peaceful, if not happy days, were yet in store for her.

After the departure of Bremont's coach, the Summervilles escorted Rachael to her home; and when they separated, it was clear to all the parties that they had laid the foundation of a pure and lasting friendship.

In the course of the first few days after the return of Lucretia from her captivity, the slave Alice and old Becky Woods had called on her at Bremont's house. Alice said she could not die contented with herself without seeing her dear young mistress once more, and to learn from her own lips that the dressing-case which she had preserved with so much care, since she had discovered it contained Lucretia's things, had been actually restored to her.

Lucretia received the negress cordially, for she remembered many acts of purely gratuitous kindness that as a little girl she had received from her. On being asked by Alice if she thought her old master would ever try to reclaim her, Lucretia related to the simple-minded woman all that had occurred to render it more than probable Padilla had permanently left New York to avoid the consequences of his murder of Beatrice Lopez; and as might

have been expected, Alice was delighted that any circumstance whatever should effectually banish her dreaded master from New York.

To preserve the character of this chapter as a faithful examiner of heroes and events necessarily neglected for the purpose of following, in a straightforward manner, the events and circumstances immediately surrounding Lucretia, Harry Monthemar is entitled to some little attention.

His voyage to Havre was without any particular incident of interest. He left that city the day he arrived there, and in the shortest possible time was in his paternal mansion in Faubourg St. Germain, Paris.

Of course his relatives and friends were delighted to see him safely returned from his visit to the United States; but when they observed his immediate and very laborious attention to the business that had provoked his sudden return, and his total abstinence from the gaieties of the French capital, they suspected at once that Cupid had been busy with him. Being questioned on the subject, he frankly told his friends that his heart was *permanently* engaged to a lady of surpassing beauty and worth, and that he intended returning to New Orleans the moment he could relieve himself from the duty which had demanded his presence in France.

This determination of the young nobleman getting abroad among his circle, an old Spanish marquis of his acquaintance, who had been an intimate friend of young Monthemar's father, signified his intention of visiting the United States in Monthemar's company.

The young viscount had received no letters from Lucretia, and only two from M. Belleville, the last of which was the one to which he had referred in his own letter to Lucretia, and which we have seen in this very chapter. The reason why Lucretia did not answer that letter (the only one her lover had written to

her) is known to the reader; therefore he knew nothing of Lucretia's visit to New York.

As no one doubted Monthemar's good taste and discernment, his friends were delighted with the prospect of another member to their coterie, who in all probability would turn out to be a gem of the first water, and add new lustre to their already brilliant circle.

In this particular they were not mistaken; but beyond admitting that the lady he had selected as his partner through life was all that is grand and beautiful, he was as silent as the grave upon the subject.

And now, at the very moment that Lucretia was preparing to return to New Orleans, Monthemar—happily ignorant of all that had occurred—and the old marquis were laying in their small stores, with the intention of leaving France for the same city in the good ship Amazon.

And now let us cast our eyes at the family of M. Belleville. After Lucretia's departure, the whole family were much depressed in spirits, entering into none of those amusements they delighted in when Lucretia was with them. When they received intelligence of her safe arrival in New York, there was at least one heavy load removed from their spirits. About this time, a young gentleman from Baltimore had been introduced to the family through letters written by several gentlemen, both French and American, in that city, highly recommending *George W. Hammersly* to the especial notice of M. Belleville.

Hammersly was of a New York family originally, but had resided in Baltimore with his paternal uncle since his early boyhood. He was a good-looking young man, well educated, of excellent temper and disposition, rather diffident from his little experience in society, and very rich in dollars.

He had not been acquainted with the Bellevilles above a week, when he found himself desperately in love with Margaret.

Elise detected his condition at once, and told her sister of the discovery. Margaret laughed the matter off, and told Elise it was more likely herself that young Hammersly was bewitched with; to which Elise had responded, that she would be revenged on Margaret for her attempt to conceal the truth from her; and on every occasion of the lover's visits to the house, she did her best to confuse both her sister and Hammersly, succeeding so far as to confirm her previous opinion, and to guess shrewdly that the youth's attentions were anything but disagreeable to her sister. Then came the news of the abduction of Lucretia; and beneath that blow, our little Ariel Elise sank down. A raging fever assailed her so vigorously, that for two weeks her life was thought to be drawing to a close. At length youth, a good conscience, and the doctor, triumphed over the disease; the fever disappeared, leaving its victim a perfectly spiritless shadow of her former self.

It was during this tedious convalescence, that young Hammersly devoted himself to poor Elise from the purest motives of sympathy and tenderness. And as Elise gradually mended, his encouraging conversation, and most positive promise that Lucretia should be recovered, even if he had to undertake the business himself (which certainly would have been a heroic act on his part, demanding, as it certainly would, a separation from Margaret, for whom he was positively dying, or thought he was, which is almost as bad), that Margaret conceived the idea he was actually making advances to Elise. And from that moment she became more sad than usual, avoiding Hammersly as much as possible, and kissing and hugging her sister with the most extraordinary tenderness, telling her, with hot tears streaming down her cheeks, that she would die to secure her happiness. And she committed so many extravagances of this description, that she exposed her situation to the keen perception of our little mischief, who actually laughed at what she considered a most capital joke. She

told Hammersly frankly what she had discovered. He swore upon his knees to the sick girl that he only wanted to be *her* brother, and that Margaret owned all his heart, for those purposes to which hearts are generally applied by people who love each other. Of course Elise believed him.

Then Mr. Flash came, with the news of Lucretia's return to her friends, and in good sound health. This news instantly restored the mental health of Elise; and if her weak limbs would have permitted, she would have leaped from her couch of cushions and danced with all her usual hilarity and joy. It was then, in the bigness of her happiness, that she drew the veil from her sister's eyes, and let her behold the light. And when the mild Margaret saw the truth, and had been thoroughly laughed at by her sprightly sister, a most perfect state of happiness and sweet contentment reigned in the family of Belleville once more.

The master of the house had not been blind to the fast-growing attachment of Hammersly for his eldest daughter, and had watched with considerable anxiety the change that had been gradually stealing upon his child; but when, on the receipt of Mr. Flash's news, Elise had told him everything, he recovered all his cheerfulness. His dearest wish was to see his daughters married, that the comforts of home might be extended around him.

Hammersly was an unexceptionable match for any lady; for although he was not calculated by nature to occupy any very exalted position in a political point of view, he was of good heart, good education, and good birth; and these were qualities to insure happiness to any *reasonable* woman whom he might love.

And now, while our eyes are yet fixed upon New Orleans, let us glance at our long neglected but never to be forgotten hero, Sandy McCulloch of Aberdeen. Padilla had (as we have related) left him in care of his house, and as a spy upon the

family of M. Belleville, and Lucretia in particular, with strict orders to send him the earliest intelligence, should anything of importance transpire in the premises. But it so happened that the first intelligence he received of Lucretia's flight from New Orleans, was communicated by a letter from Padilla himself, dated at Charleston, South Carolina, while he was on his journey to New York.

From that moment the gallant Caledonian had given himself up entirely to the luxuries of idleness, gluttony, and eternal thirst, all of which three active principles of his existence were amply sustained by the bounty of his noble employer. He received letter after letter from the Spaniard, giving a very dim outline of his proceedings in New York, until one fine morning he received a letter ordering him to be in readiness to depart on a sea-voyage at an hour's notice, for which purpose, on the first following intimation, he was to proceed to the *Chenier Caminada* on the Gulf of Mexico, and there await the arrival of the schooner that was to carry him to Cadiz in Old Spain. The letter also informed him, that he would find money and written instructions on board the schooner, addressed to him.

This letter had been written by Padilla only a few days before the escape of Lucretia, when, being convinced that he had lost the box and contents forever, and that it was now impossible to keep the history of Lucretia's birth and parentage a secret much longer, he had resolved to take her to Spain and cast her upon the family of his hated rival, after having forced her to submit to the most disgusting brutality, from himself first, and then from the entire crew of the schooner, including his Scotch minister, Sandy.

It had also been a part of his plan to take Beatrice Lopez with him to employ her healing art for the purpose of defeating death, should he approach the doomed maiden during the horrible suffering she was to have endured on that voyage; but we have seen how all his monstrous infamy was defeated, and how,

in a fit of rage, he had destroyed his ci-devant mistress by a well-directed pistol shot.

Well, when Sandy received this last letter, he guessed that Padilla had entirely failed in his expedition to New York, and that the promise of money on board the schooner was all gammon, that Padilla had again adopted the slave-trade as a profession, and was endeavoring to entrap him (Sandy) on board, to prevent his doing any mischief in the way of giving information to the authorities. Being a treacherous dog himself, the wily Scot considered every other man his equal at least in that particular. Then he was suddenly attacked by a tickling sensation in the palms of his hands, which soon extended to his finger ends; and when under the influence of this peculiar and very characteristic nervous irritability, or palmistry, his acquisitiveness overcame the entire front section of the brain, and he would instantly fall to taking whatever came in his way, for general relief.

Now, Padilla's last letter set the *bluid* of the McCullochs in rapid motion. That portion of Macbeth's soliloquy, about shutting the door against the robber instead of bearing the knife himself against old Duncan who was there in double trust, having been well considered, he repaired to the house of his friend, and at once set to work diligently to prepare for a journey of a very different description to that which his old captain had chalked out for him.

His first care was (Sandy was a careful man) to send the old negress on an errand down to the lower end of faubourg Trémé, which would occupy her at least six hours, and he then proceeded to force open all the locks that he supposed to be the warders of treasure; but finding nothing at all, not even papers—for the Spaniard had removed everything of value but the furniture—he was so incensed by the sudden destruction of his hopes for a brilliant booty, that he swore he would slit the *wheezin* of the mean-spirited Spaniard the first time he should meet him.

Being determined not to be outdone by the still triumphant genius of the Spaniard, Sandy rushed up town, hired three furniture carts, loaded them with the most costly of Padilla's movables, carried them to a dealer, and realized a respectable sum, in cash, for the lot. He would have returned for more, had he not thought he was closely observed by a strange looking little fellow, who seemed to eye his proceedings with more than ordinary attention.

His first coup de main proving perfectly successful, he tried a second, by going boldly to the merchant (a Spaniard) with whom Padilla transacted all his money operations, and on the faith, or rather on the strength, of his position in Padilla's house, managed to get a loan of two hundred dollars, on the plea that he had more than that much wages due him by Padilla.

His store now being sufficiently large to cover a long retreat, he took up his line of march, and by the time the slave returned, Sandy was bounding over the muddy waters of Lake Pontchartrain, toward Mobile. The slave found herself mistress of the plundered domain.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNDERGROUND LIFE IN NEW YORK.

On the 15th of July, William Rankin received a message from Lucretia, to the effect that she would start for New Orleans on the 20th of that month, by the way of Philadelphia, Baltimore, the Alleghany Mountains, Wheeling, and the Ohio River. This was glad tidings to Rankin, for things at the cottage were now in perfect order, and he was becoming tired of the inactivity of a country life. It is true that there had been several sailing excursions in the boat, with Harry, Rosalie, and Snappy, but there was a restlessness about him that would never be quieted until his mistress should be once more safely at home.

Two things now began to trouble the giant. What was to become of his mentor, George Snapp, Esq. During the recent events, Snappy had proved himself such a faithful and valuable friend and coadjutor, that Bill could not bear the idea of parting with him; and the thought then struck him that Snappy should go along to New Orleans and share whatever benefits might arise from the perfect success of the mission to New York.

He no sooner came to a conclusion on this subject than he imparted his wishes to his friend. Snappy was delighted with the proposal, but suggested to Bill, the Lady Lucretia might suspect him of "*trying to come the loafing dodge over her*," and rather than permit such a suspicion to exist against him, he would forego the pleasure of Bill's company.

But Rankin told him that was all nonsense, adding: "You see, Georgy, I know the lady is a reg'lar trump, none of your mealy-mouthed make-believes, that never speaks half wot they think. If Miss Lucretia says yes, it's right, as sure as you haint got no Roman nose."

At this figure of Bill's, Snappy drew his hat down in front to the very lids of his eyes, threw back the lappets of his coat, thrust his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, threw forward his chin, drew down the corners of his humorous mouth, elevated his nether lip (*à la* John Bull when he finds his mutton cooked too much), and said:

"Say, ole Rankin, how is it about that *Rummin nose*? Aint this snubby a right sharp paste horn, on a trial?" He disengaged his right hand, as he spoke, and laid the first finger of that hand on the point of his aspiring organ. Rankin rejoined:

"Well, it is, Georgy. You haint got much of a gourd, but wot there is of it is lively. Now, see here, Snappy, of all the boys I ever had anything to do with, I like you the best. I choosed you to be my second in the sharpest mill I ever went in to, and you done the bis'ness like a man. In this here last thing, I choosed you agin, and you aint disappointed me not onst. And wot's the consequence? Why, I like you all the more. Now, see here. I'm goin' to see that blessed woman safe home, for that blasted Piddilly is alive yet, if he aint caught, and I know I'm to git a send ahead in the world for my service. Now, I don't want you to think, Georgy, nor nobody else, that I went into this jist to make money, for I didn't; I only thought I might do the lady a service by tellin her wot I know'd, but when I heered her talk, and when she talked to me about myself, and about my being kicked about in the world when I was a mere babby, and how she believed God had given me a good heart, if I only had somebody to show me how to go, why, I worshipped her, and I took an oath that I was done with *Park*

Row and the *Ring*, forever. That woman—that down-right angel—has made a noo man of me, sure! She learnt me the difference between a loafer and a man; and I seen at onst that I had been a loafer all my life till she took me in trainin. Wot work did I do, Snappy? Why, nothin! I loafed 'bout *Park Row*, *Ben True's*, *Rub Bunn's*, and *Pete Byard's*, all the time, to let a lot of men feel my *mussels* (shutting his fist and raising his hand), and to match me for a fight, jist the same as if I was a dog, without the heart and soul of a Christian. Well, you see, this angel lady was the first one that made me feel ashamed of the past, and, at the same time, teached me to hope for better things in the time to come. Snappy, I never prayed in my life till I knowed her. I never knowed that I could do an act to make another pray for me; and she has done it, for I heered her say: '*God bless him for his honest heart.*'"

Here Bill's voice faltered, and he came to a full stop. Snappy looked at him intently a moment, and then said:

"What great favor have you done the lady besides what I've seen you doin here in New York?"

"It was me, Georgy, who told her the secret about the things in that box, and who had it."

"Oh, ho!" said Georgy, "that's quite another thing, my blossom; I thought you was jist workin in this here affair without bein up in the private parts of the bis'ness. Now, mark me, Bill, she's goin to take you out yonder, jist to git you away from the old stampin ground and to set you up in some kind of trade. I'll go along, Bill, sure as shootin; and if I can't do nothin else, why, I guess I'll turn in to butcherin again. I ain't forgot how to sling the steel yet, and the old trade may do us some good after all."

"'Nuff sed," rejoined Bill, extending his hand to his friend, giving him a grasp of such earnest affection that even if Snappy

had been a man of much less feeling than he really was, he could not have failed being touched by it. Bill continued:

"And wot ever I git, Georgy, I'm halves with you. Who knows?—perhaps she'll set me up in a porter-house on some of the great stage routes out there. She knows I ain't got no trade, and I shouldn't wonder now if that ain't the very thing she's been thinking of all along."

"Why, Bill," rejoined Snappy, with a jerk of his head settling his hat on one side, "you're as innissint as a suckin pig, *you* are. What in blazes do you think *that* lady knows about porter-houses? Why them tip-top bugs look on grog-shop keepers as the lowest animals in all creation."

"How do you know that, Georgy?"

"Havn't I heered 'em talk—and don't I read the "New York Observer," Sunday mornin for the old woman—and ain't it full of dreadful accounts of how many wives and children are brought to pass their lives in a prison by the tippling shop? Why, pinkey, if my good old mother thought that I've been wissitin sitch places these last five years, if I don't think her hair would stand up so stiff, she'd never be able to mount her cap again."

"Then, you wouldn't like to see me in that kind of bisness?" said Bill.

"To be sure I would, my pounder, and I would help you in it, too."

"But what would your old mother say?"

"Why, what could she say? I would tell her I was clerk in a meeting-house, and she would be sure to believe me."

"But, would money made in that fashion bring any good to us," objected Bill.

"Now, my big innissint, don't talk that way. What do you suppose is the difference how a man makes his money, so that it's honest? All we would have to do would be, first, to make a *bushel*, then sell out the stock and good-will of the crib—move

off to some other place—jine a church—have prayer-meetins and carry a large hymn-book bound in red merrocker, in your hand on Sunday, and all your feller-Christians will never onst ask where your dough come from. *Money*, my blossom, will wipe away *willainy*. Why won't it wipe away *whisky-sellin*? Now, to my mind, there's nothin no worse in keepin an honest tavern—where a man can drink without gettin pisened—than there is in sellin bad cod-fish, mixed liquors and 'dulterated ile, to make a fortune by. When you get the stuff, quit the trade, lay in a stock of white cravats and long faces for show on Sunday, and nobody but death and the devil will ever remind you of the cheat."

"Them's the wery two fellers *I* don't want to remind *me* of anything," said Bill. "But to make the matter sure, I'll ask the angel wot she thinks of the trade before I touch it."

"Well, well, pinkey, do jist as you please, but mind wot I tell you—if you keep an *honest* crib, the two gentlemen you spoke of jist now will never trouble you; for the *first one* only comes round as a matter of course to *every* one, and the other can't damage an honest heart and clean bosom, on the score of charity."

"Well, I suppose you're right," said Bill, "and so that pint's settled. Now to a little bisness. What do you say to a reg'lar night's cruise after Piddilly, before we start South?"

"I'm your man," said Georgy, with a sharp jerk of his head, which, by the by, retained its place upon his shoulders well, under the sharp treatment its owner subjected it to so frequently.

"I owe him a round for that bullet he drove through my hat on the night of the escape; and do you know, Bill, that I've an opinion that the Spanish wagabone is about town yet!"

"Them's my sentiments," said Bill, "and we may catch him yet. To-day is Wensday, Georgy, and as we must start South on Monday coming, it will be jist as well if we pack up our traps to-day

and bid good bye to the widder and her children in the morning till we go for good. What do you say."

"All right, my chick," was exactly what Snappy said. That day William Jones, Esq., announced to the Summerville family his intentions. The good woman expressed a regret that he could not remain at the cottage all summer. Harry and Rosalie had become so attached to Rankin on account of his kind disposition, his honesty and fidelity to the cause of Lucretia, and his unfeigned sorrow for the short indisposition of the fairy-like girl who had attended him during his illness, that they looked forward to the day of his departure with real regret; however, to use a perfectly new phrase, *the best of friends must part.* On the following day, the gladiator and his second took leave of the cottagers and settled themselves in a private boarding-house until they should leave the city.

On the same day, Bill waited upon Lucretia for orders, as he said, but she not having any to give, he commenced scratching his ear and counting the flies on the centre table. Lucretia was not long in concluding that he had something to say, and was troubled about making a beginning; displaying one of her most encouraging smiles, she said: "What have you to say, William? I know you have come to ask me for something. Speak out plainly, for your services to me have been most valuable."

"You see, mam, *my* services haven't been so much after all. My friend George Snapp fust got me on the scent in the beginning (Lucretia smiled again) and ever sense he's stuck to me and your interest, mam, like a major; and I thought"——

"You thought," interrupted Lucretia, "that he also should be rewarded?"

"Not a bit of it, mam; Snappy aint no sitch feller; I only thought that as I've got to go back with you to Nóo Orleens, I would jist like to take him with me, that's all, mam."

"William, I do not like to *force* you back to the South; but

I thought by drawing you to the Crescent City, I would be doing you a service. The people whose company you have been keeping since your first recollections, are unfit associates for a man of your honesty and bravery. Nothing but evil can come from such associates; and if you remain here, you will be constantly surrounded by them, at least until all your money is gone, when you will be driven away again by your necessities. My object was to settle you in some respectable business in the South, where you could make new friends and become as useful to society as you are honest in all your intentions; but if you do not wish to return, you shall receive the reward of your fidelity to me, *here*."

Bill was touched by her kindness, and although he plainly saw that she had misunderstood him, it was some moments before he could reply, so moved was he by what his mistress had said.

Observing his emotion, she remained silent, giving him time to recover himself, for she already knew him well enough to understand that she had mistaken his wishes, but in what particular she was yet unable to guess. Presently Bill said:

"It don't want much force to make me wait on you back to Noo Orleens, mam, and I wasn't thinking about any reward neether; all I wanted was jist to git your permission to let Snappy go along with me. For you see, mam, I don't want to live here in this city, and I was thinkin all along if I was to go in bisness, Georgy could do the figuring for me, and keep affairs straight. George Snapp can read and write and knows rithmitick, and he's a reg'lar bred butcher by trade; and wot's more, a honester boy don't walk New York city. That's all I wanted to say, mam."

"William, I am pleased to learn your intention of quitting this place. Return with me home and bring your friend with you; two such guardians will be all the protection I need, and whatever plan I fix on to repay you for all you have done and

may yet have to do for me, your friend, Mr. Snapp, shall not be forgotten.

"God bless you, mam, you couldn't done me a bigger favor than this. And when you *do* git safe home, I want, mam, your opinion about a certain bisness I expect to open in—whether it's respectable or not, accordin to your thinkin, mam—that's all."

"I will never fail you when you need help or advice, nor will I ever cease to remember all you have done for me. And now that I fully understand that I am to have two protectors (another smile) instead of one, I shall enter upon my journey with the most perfect confidence."

"I don't think, mam, you will have much cause to fear; for although the old Spanish wagabone is alive, he is a murderer, and every man's hand is agin him—so Snappy says. But I know *one* man whose *two* hands will make strong acquaintance with that neck of his'n whenever they meet—that's all."

Being perfectly delighted with the result of his visit, William Rankin took his departure, promising to be on the mark with his friend, in having everything in readiness for the journey. Then hastening to Mr. Snapp, who was waiting at the porter-house kept by George Riley, opposite the Washington Parade Ground, he imparted to that citizen the full particulars of his mission.

As may reasonably be expected, both these gentlemen were in ecstasies at the prospect before them, and ordering some draught Poughkeepsie ale and Welsh rabbits, seated themselves to talk the matter over.

Snappy was to tell his mother, that day, of his intentions, so that she could darn all his socks and shirts into a perfect state of readiness to receive him at the shortest notice; and as the old lady was in comfortable circumstances through the thrift of *Snappy Senior*, who had departed this life some seven years previous to the commencement of our history—it is more than

probable she would view the approaching exile of her only child (our Snappy) with satisfaction, on account of the vast increase in her outlay since Georgy had left off butchering horned cattle for the science of butchering men in the gladiatorial arena.

While thus engaged, a number of persons entered the bar-room for cocktails and toddies, some seating themselves and others passing out again as soon as they were served, without attracting any particular notice ; but presently two rough customers entered, who had the appearance of being either Italian or Spanish seamen.

They seated themselves at the next table to that where Bill and Snappy were munching their lunch. The strangers carried on an animated conversation in *Spanish*, so *our* friends did not *learn* much, although they *paid* much attention to all that was going on around them—Snappy's doctrine being, it is far better to listen, than to tell your own secrets.

Although at first balked, Mr. Snapp's universal caution was at length rewarded ; for in a few moments the Spaniards were joined by a third person who also had the appearance of being a seaman, but judging from his pig-colored (dirty white) hair and whiskers, pale blue eyes with snuff-colored spots upon them, his vast mouth, large nose, high cheek bones, and the cunning expression that lurked about the corners of his eyes and mouth, almost any man would say, on looking at him intently, *that* is a Scotchman. And so he was.

This man had certainly been expected by the other two, for a lunch of cheese, sausage, biscuit and wine was called for, and the party fell to with vigor. This time the conversation was conducted to the vernacular of our friends, who listened most attentively.

" Have you seen him yet ?" said Spaniard No. One, addressing the Scotchman.

" Yes !" said Sawney, with his mouth full of cheese.

"And what's the news?" said the first; but just as the question fell upon the Caledonian's ear, his britannia metal mug, filled with foaming strong beer, touched his lips, and rose bottom upward slowly, until its contents were buried in his stomach. The mug was removed to give egress to a deep-drawn sigh of satisfaction, on the back of which came his answer to the Spaniard's question, in a word:

"Nothing."

"How's that?" interrogated No. One. "Would not the old boy speak to you?"

"Yes, he spoke to me," answered Scotty, "and told me to be off about my business, and not hang about M. Bremont's house any longer, if I wished to save my thrapple from a wheezing."

At mention of Bremont's name, Snappy winked at Rankin, and Rankin winked back again, when Snappy drew down the corners of his mouth and closed one eye entirely, and laid the finger of his right hand on his lips by way of moving for silence, and the others proceeded:

"This is a pretty piece of business," said No. One. "What will the *Don* say to-night when we tell him we don't know whether she's gone or not?"

"It's no use to go to him with any such story," said Spaniard No. Two; "we must find out all we want to know before dark, or there'll be an end of our reward, or maybe of ourselves, for Captain Padilla is not backward either with powder or steel."

"Weel, laddies, what d'ye prepose to do?" said the Scot.

"Why!" rejoined No. Two, "go to the servants about the house and inquire, to be sure; old Bremont must be very cunning if he can keep such a thing concealed. But leave it to me, and I'll be bound to bring a good account of the lady."

"Let us separate and try by ourselves," said No. One.

"Agreed," said the Scot.

"And where shall we meet again?" said No. Two.

"Why, at the cellar in Cherry street. *He*'ll be there," responded No. One.

"I dinna like the atmosphere o' that domned cellar. It's two stories under ground, and smells like a big grave, and I foraver think of the worms and bugs of the airth, while I'm in the hole," and he drew up his nose in disgust.

"Now let's to work," said No. One, and they went to the counter and settled their bill; in doing which, for the first time, they appeared to notice our friends; but as Snappy was snoring softly and Bill was *reading a newspaper for the first time in his life*, the party paid no attention to their recent neighbors, and left the house immediately.

As the noise of their footsteps died away, Georgy Nippers opened one of his eyes and peered at Bill, whose eyes were wide open and fixed on Snappy's face just over the top of the journal, which was upside down in his hands.

"Are they gone?" said Snappy, without changing his position

"Clean!" said Bill, without a move.

"Then it's time for *me* to wake up. Come, Bill! let's settle and slide."

And they sprang to their feet with so much alacrity that the barkeeper, who had fully believed Snappy was sleeping, and was on the point of telling Bill to wake his friend, as no *sleepers* were permitted to indulge in that bar-room, actually started with surprise, and exclaimed:

"Hellow, fellers!—well there! if you aint *fly* I'm no *nob*. The listening dodge, hey? Well there, if you didn't play your cards well, I wouldn't say it; do you know them coves that's jist gone out?"

"Say! daddy," said George with a jerk of his head, the freemasonry of which was perfectly intelligible to the barkeeper, who gave his *pippin* a responsive twitch, "I know 'em and I *don't* know 'em—do you take?"

"I *gess* so," replied the lad, for he was not more than sixteen years of age. "They look to me jist like three crosses. Them's no square men, I'll bet. Say, sunny (sonny), do you know what lay they're on? Say, aint you two twigs in muff?"

Now at this erroneous supposition of the barkeeper, that Bill and Snappy were police officers in disguise, the last named gentleman closed an eye, drew down the corners of his mouth again, and laid the fore-finger of his right hand along the right side of his nose, looked at the barkeeper knowingly a moment, then said:

"How much to pay?"

"I *knowed* you was," shouted the lad. "Four and sixpence—I *knowed* it all along. Four and six, sir."

Snappy laid down two half dollars on the counter with a slight, dry cough, pulled his hat further down over his eyes, winked to Bill out of the corner of his left, took his change, buttoned his trowsers pocket, pulled down his vest, patted the barkeeper gently on the head, saying: "You'll do, bub," and walked in a very officer-like manner out of the bar-room, followed by William Rankin, Esq.

As soon as they turned the corner, they made directly for the back gate of Bremont's house, and were instantly admitted. M. Bremont was down at the counting-house, but Lucretia was at home. Bill and Snappy were shown into a little parlor, where they were joined in a few moments by our heroine. As soon as Lucretia, looked in Rankin's face, she saw something was afloat concerning herself. She told both men to be seated and waited for the news. After several very bad attempts at a beginning, Lucretia, seeing that his excitement was too great to permit of his being intelligible, turned to Mr. Snapp and said:

"What has occurred to-day, since William was here, to create all his present excitement?"

"Yes! let Georgy speak, for I can't," said Bill.

"Well, madam, this is the story. Of course you know,

madam, that my friend here called on you this morning to git your permission for me to go to Noo Orleans with him. Well! I was waitin for him and we went to George Riley's porter house to take a drink and a lunch over our good luck. (Lucretia smiled.) Well, while we was settin at a table takin our rabbit and drink, who should come in but two Spaniards and a Scotchman"——

"No, no," interrupted Bill, "the Scotchman came in *after* the *Deegoes*."

"All's one for that," said Snappy with a jerk of the head, "for they didn't speak a word of *American* till the Scotchman come, and I know you didn't understand their lingo (to Bill). Well, the whole three begun to talk, and the long and short of it is, they was talkin about you, madam, and that thief Padilla."

"How do you know that?" interrogated Lucretia.

"Because we heard them use Padilla's name and Mr. Bremont's name, and somethin about *her* being gone yet. We didn't hear them speak your name, madam, but we *did* hear enough to know they was speakin about you."

"I think you are right," said Lucretia. "But did you learn whether Padilla is yet in the city or not?"

"Well we *did*," answered Snappy, "and what's more, we know where he's going to be to-night; and what's more than that, agin, madam, we're goin to grab him as sure as apples aint pertaters, aint we Bill?"

"Only wait till night and I'll show you," was the reply.

"But you surely will not go alone?" said Lucretia.

"Not that we knows of," replied Snappy; "but we intend to take half a dozen of the sharpest blades from the police office along, and then there will be sitch sport as you never did see, madam."

"You surely intend telling M. Bremont all that you have just been telling to me?"

"There's jist the place we're goin to now," said Bill, recovering from the check Snappy had given him, "and he will go to the police office with us to make the arrangements."

"That's well," said Lucretia, "and tell M. Bremont I will not stir outside the house until he returns home. Now hasten, my *friends*, and spare no trouble or expense to bring that bad man to justice."

Rankin and Snapp left the house by the backway again, and taking an omnibus on Broadway, were soon in the counting-house of the French merchant. In as few words as possible they related all that had passed both at Riley's and at his own house; and as Bremont was a most wonderfully quick operator, he put on his hat and led the way to the police office after directing Bill and Snappy to gain the same point by different routes.

Messrs. Hays and Jackson were once more in requisition, promising to bring four others who could be relied on, and meet Bill and Snappy at a certain public-house which they designated, at nine o'clock that night, to make the descent upon the cellar. Bremont said he should remain at home to prevent a surprise of any kind, not exactly knowing what daring step such a villain as Padilla might determine to take.

Everything being thus arranged, and Bremont offering to pay another thousand dollars reward for the capture of the Spanish demon, the company parted to make all necessary preparations.

To the reader who has never heard of these dens of infamy, deep in the bowels of the earth, even *my* description of *one* of them will not be found uninteresting. New York was a great place sóme twenty-five years since, and if one may be permitted to judge by the record of crime *discovered* there *now*, the morality of its atmosphere is not much improved. And yet, in all probability, there are tens of thousands of its inhabitants who have not the most remote idea of the vice and villainy practised with the most perfect success in their very midst.

As I write, it is about twenty-four or five years since I visited a cellar two stories deep beneath the surface of the ground in my native city. It is true that I am not so young as not to have had ample time to be a better man than I am, yet I am not so old as to *despair* of ample time for repentance, or to have lost the slightest shade of impression made on my *boy's* mind (for I was only a boy, not yet a lad) while I was in that human hell. You scamp you, what were you doing there, some of you will say. I'll tell you. I was a boy without parents—alone, for I would not be controlled by more distant relatives—bold almost to impudence—forward *almost* to destruction—active, inquiring, industrious, willful, *very anxious to become a man*, and honest. I had heard men speak of these places, and what I heard fired me with an uncontrollable desire to be a witness to the infernal sports described by those who little thought their unconnected sentences were gathered carefully by a wild, spirited boy, perhaps to lose him irretrievably in the gulf of shame and infamy.

Thus, being all excitement and curiosity on the subject, I set to work in earnest, and soon found in the *oldest boy* of my acquaintance (he being about sixteen and I his junior) a fit person to conduct the affair, that is, my introduction to the underground society of New York. And here, permit me to dismiss myself with the following paragraph :

The reader will consider the scene I am about to describe as being the identical one I witnessed while yet a boy.

The long-wished for night came, and the two friends were at the place of meeting an hour before the appointed time. Snappy had warned his companion about talking too loud in strange places, and the consequences were, that after having taken a drink of something light, and a cigar, not a word passed between them until the officers arrived.

The surprise party being assembled, the following arrangement was made : Every one except Hays and Jackson, being perfectly

disguised and well armed, they were to separate by twos and enter the place at five minutes' distance from each other, that so large a party entering at once might not excite any suspicion. Bill and Snappy were to enter first, then Hays and Jackson were to follow, and signify to the proprietor, who was well known to them, that they were watching our friends. Then two other officers were to enter as if in search of amusement, and the last two were to keep a sharp look-out by the public entrance, and not come in without being called by the whistle.

Snappy and Rankin started off first, and were not long in reaching the house. It was an old two story brick, the portion above the ground being occupied by the family of the miscreant who kept the entertainment saloons below. The customary northern cellar presented itself to the passer by, being entered by a broad flight of stone steps, twelve in number. Over this bold entrance, a handsome iron arch had been raised, which supported one of Hannington's most magnificent Chinese cut transparent signs, with these words in the centre: "*Oysters on the Canal street Plan.*" On the edge of the sidewalk, supported by two of the awning posts, was another iron arch ornamented with a large octagonal lamp, on the side of which, in transparent colors, appeared: "Oysters in every Style," "Best of Liquors," "Best Havana Cigars," "Lunch at all Hours of the Day and Night," "By Ben Handle."

On descending to this saloon, Bill, who until this night was a stranger to this portion of his native city, was dazzled by its brilliancy. The place was lighted with gas, the floor was painted white, the counter was white, and covered with white marble, and ornamented with a beautiful fret-work brass railing. Two large French mirrors, behind the bar, sent back with flashing brilliancy the various colored cut glass-ware, and the highly colored paintings and prints that adorned the surrounding walls in costly frames of gilt. Further from the entrance stood a long range of cells,

or boxes, furnished with a table and seats, for the visitors to take their oysters or other refreshments in. These were tastefully fitted up in the style of the bar and the oyster stand, which stood on the left of the saloon near the entrance. The place was about thirty feet wide and sixty long, and there were about eight men and boys in service to wait on customers.

Rankin and Snappy went up to the bar and called for a glass of ale each, and when they had finished drinking, and paid their shilling (for this was no three cent shop), Snappy glanced at the clock, and with all the assurance of a constant habitué, swaggered up to one of the barkeepers, with a knowing wink, asked him if there was any company below. To which the barkeeper replied with an affirmative nod.

Snappy, who had actually been there several times, gave Bill a punch with his elbow, to follow him, then leading the way to the back of the saloon, entered the last cell, or box, which, to the surprise of Rankin, had no table or furniture in it; but before he had time to express his surprise, Snappy said to him, in a quick under tone:

"Now, keep your eye skinned, for if you show any surprise at what you'll see, they'll dock you as a spy at once. Do as I do, no one, not even your *mother* would know you in that disguise."

At the mention of his mother, Bill thought of Lucretia, as being the first of womankind from whom he had ever received a word of real tenderness in his life. The thought made him sigh; for since he first knew Lucretia, and had enjoyed the society of the Summervilles, he had begun to form some idea of a mother's love, and consequently to feel his own desolate condition. It was this thought that make him sigh. Snappy noticed his momentary abstraction, and said:

"Why, Bill, wot ails you, are you sorry you're come? Do you want to let Lucretia's deadly enemy escape?"

"Never!" said Bill, with almost too much energy. "I'm

not afraid, Snappy, and you know it, but I was jist thinkin of something, that's all. Now, lead on."

Snappy smiled and put his finger on his lip for caution, and the next instant touching a spring invisible to Rankin; a concealed door at the back of the cell flew open, disclosing a long narrow passage, built up and arched with brick, leading further back from the street. It was lighted with gas-burners.

When they entered this passage, the door closed behind them, and as they advanced along the alley, the hum of voices, as from the depths of the earth, came to their ears. When they reached the other end of the passage, Snappy opened another door much larger than the first, and displayed to the astonished eyes of his comrade a broad flight of stone steps, fifteen in number, descending still lower in the earth.

Without any hesitation, they went down the steps, and the next instant they stood in *a second story cellar*, and what a sight was there, for the uninitiated!

The cavern was twice as long as the cellar *above* their heads, extending from the back of the yard almost to the front line of the lot on which the house stood. It was bricked up and arched, the arches being supported by pillars, and brilliantly illuminated with gas.

The first words uttered by Bill, were:

"How do they git air down here, Georgy?"

Snappy answered with a low, hissing sound, to bring Bill to his senses, and walking toward the front of the saloon, appeared to notice nothing. The place was fitted up in style. A brilliant and well furnished bar and oyster stand (although in contravention of law, oysters could be found here any night in the year) were situated near the front of the vault, and on one entire side stood a row of gaming-tables, where rouge et noir, rolling Pharo, box pharo (the real old tiger, that fools like *to* fight) craps, sweat and twenty-one, were offered for the

patronage of the assembly, by as arrant a set of expert robbers as ever disgraced the human form. At the rear, or near the stairway by which they had entered, was a slightly raised platform, on which was seated an orchestra company, comprising six performers, as follows: A fiddle, a violoncello, a piccolo flute, two valve trumpets, and a trombone. Waltzes and quadrilles were the order of the night, to all those who desired to take a steam bath.

But the most surprising feature of the arrangement, to Bill's mind, was the manner in which the place was ventilated, and actually rendered more pleasantly cool than the street itself in which the building stood. Large windpipes, made of staves hooped together, extended from the ceiling of the vault up into the open air, the tops being arranged on the reverse principle of an ordinary smoke-jack; and as there was a narrow gallery completely surrounding the cellar with large square holes opening into the saloon, there was a constant and very strong current of air passing through the room.

The company assembled in this mortal Pandemonium, was composed of gamblers, murderers, thieves, burglars, highwaymen, cab drivers, *boy*-thieves, and women of the most abandoned and profligate character the metropolis of the western world can boast of being ever ready to furnish. Some were gaming, some dancing, some drinking, some sleeping on the benches, some conversing in whispers, no doubt planning murders and robberies, and some, like our friends, were lounging up and down without any apparent reason or inclination whatever. The conversation generally was carried on in the slang of professional felons, but when it ascended to the vernacular, it was the most blasphemous and filthy imaginable.

The *children*—the ripening scholars of this infernal academy—were either stealing furtive glances at the strange faces they saw, or studying, with all the calm intensity of thorough-bred gamesters, the chances of the various games progressing, and the effect of good and bad luck upon the various players. The costumes

were in different styles according to the tastes and finances of the several wearers. Every grade of society, so far as appearances go, appeared there, from the coarse ruffian to the finished gentleman; and from the brazen painted harlot to the pensive and retiring lady, gifted with every outward grace and attribute that Heaven has created and invested woman with, to render her the sublimest creature in creation.

Great God! what direful revolutions must have shaken the hearts and souls of thy children, to crumble into ashes the altars of thy glory—Virtue, Love and Innocence!

But let us not strain the aching senses to exhume the *causes* from the sepulchre of the past, lest the terrible effect shall pale before them.

To return to our story, Bill, after the first few moments of wonder, kept up a sharp fire with his eyes, in the hope of seeing Padilla. Snappy walked by his side, and once in a while would designate some one who had lately returned from the State Prison, and then, some woman who had been the victim, first of a heartless seduction, and then the mistress of such a merchant, and *now*, a daughter of night and sorrow. In turning again toward the bar to get two cigars, they saw the two Spaniards and the Scotchman leaning on the end of the counter. Bill, who was always forgetting his disguise, was about to dodge them, when a "*Say! Have you forgot your whiskers?*" from Snappy, brought him to his senses.

The cigars were bought and lighted, when one of the Spaniards, who had been holding an animated conversation with his comrades, stepped up to Bill with a cigarette in his fingers, and politely asked him for a light. Bill took the cigar from his mouth and handed it to the Spaniard; their eyes were within a foot of each other, and when the Spaniard returned Bill's cigar, they gazed so steadfastly, that one might have thought they knew the secrets of each other's heart. Snappy observing this, and

fearing some unfortunate outbreak from his impetuous friend, stepped up jocosely, and said:

"Well, ole whiskers, have you found a *pal* at last?"

"Why, I thought so at fust," said Bill, greatly relieved, "but I guess I'm mistaken. Say! Didn't I meet you some three years ago, in Auburn?"

As this question was addressed to the Spaniard, he immediately—in much better English than our friends were in the habit of using—said:

"No, sir! Three years ago I was on the west coast of Africa, mate of a brig fitted out in this city to run slaves into the island of Cuba. I never saw Auburn. You are mistaken, sir."

As the Spaniard turned to his friends, Bill was about to ask him to take a drink, when Snappy said, hurriedly:

"Look down the room."

Bill looked, and saw the two officers lounging along, nodding first to this one, and shaking hands with that, then listening to a whisper from some fallen angel (perfectly new sentence), and passing him and Georgy as if they had never seen them before.

It may be here well to state, that a certain intimacy between police officers and felons is always considered necessary to aid the officers of justice to discover robberies and detect robbers; for these thieves are constantly *peaching* on each other for some real or imaginary cause. But it may be asked why the officers who visit these places on business do not arrest the *boys* we have spoken of. I will explain. As soon as any officer enters the first cellar, one of the bar-keepers seizes a bell-pull arranged beneath the counter, whereupon a shrill bell concealed in the hollow open work of a cap on one of the columns down on the second cellar, rings, and the next instant everything and everybody liable to immediate arrest, disappears into the narrow gallery that surrounds the saloon, and the officers are none the wiser.

When *I* was there, this bell was rung, and not understanding

what it meant, although a burly villain shouted to some one to "*Chuck that Kinchen into the valley,*" I was caught. *Kinchen*, my friendly and unsophisticated reader, in thief parlance, means boy or child thief of either sex; you will therefore observe that I must have been both very small and very young. *I* did not move, and was, in the next two minutes, terrified out of my senses by finding myself in the grasp of an officer, who had known me since I was able to run about. He took me upstairs into the street, without speaking a word till he got there, and then he said (I will not forget it while reason holds her throne):

"Now tell me the truth. Have you ever been there before?" I answered, "*No!*"

"Do you know that nineteen out of every twenty persons in that place are thieves and felons?"

I answered "No," again, and he proceeded:

"Now, mark me well! Tell me who took you there."

I said I would *not* tell, because I had promised not to. He then said:

"Now, if you wish to go right straight to hell, come here once more. The person who brought you knows what store you are in, don't he?"

I said, "Yes."

"And the next thing will be a robbery, and *you* will be made to *appear* to be the thief. Do you understand that?" said he.

I trembled in every joint, but said nothing, and he continued:

"Now go home, and keep your own secret about your doings on this night. *Never come here again*, and I promise not to mention it; but as sure as I find out that you have broken your word to me, I will tell your employers everything I know. Will you promise?"

I answered yes; he released me, and I left him. But I lingered at the corner, suspecting a row of some kind, and I was not

mistaken. Yet I intended to keep my promise essentially, and am proud to say I *did* so, with perfect satisfaction to myself. And now we resume the story again.

In a few moments more, the two disguised officers came in, and yet our friends saw nothing of Padilla or anybody that resembled him at all in gait or manner. Snappy glanced at the clock over the bar, and observing it was almost midnight, told Bill they had better hang about the Spaniards to catch their conversation if possible, as it might lead to some advantage; then Bill suggested that Snappy had better hang within ear-shot of the men by himself, so that *he* might have a chance of pointing them out to the officers. This was agreed to.

A short time after, Bill found a chance to point out the group to Hays and Jackson. In the presence of the two undisguised officers the affairs of the den went on smoothly enough, but as the clock struck the hour of midnight, William Rankin began to show evident signs of impatience, and Snappy once more became alarmed for the success of their well-laid plot; a timely nudge from Georgy's elbow, well planted in Rankin's ribs, restored him again to quiet.

Another half hour rolled away, the sports and games going on harmoniously, when Padilla came down the stair and entered the saloon. He was disguised, wearing the jacket, trowsers and hat of the tidy sailor; white pantaloons, blue jacket, white sinnett hat, white heavy linen shirt, broad collar, black cravat, no suspenders, pumps and white stockings; a perfect man-of-war rig. On his face he wore a false nose, and false moustache and whiskers, that concealed the most of his face.

When he entered, Snappy heard one of the Spaniards say, "*there he is.*" But Rankin, who was leaning on the other end of the counter, near a little bronze statue of Mercury, from whose winged helmet a bright column of flame arose for the convenience of cigar smokers, knew Padilla in a moment and was in the act

of darting forward to seize him, when the game was played out by a single accidental stroke, as thus:

A fellow, two-thirds drunk, who had been drinking just behind Rankin, had rolled up a circus bill to light the stump of cigar in his mouth. He *did* manage to light the paper by reaching behind the broad shoulders of Rankin, but in bringing it to his cigar he managed so clumsily that he brought his flaming torch in contact with the flaming false whiskers of our gladiator at the very instant he was about to leap forward upon his prey. Finding his face surrounded by flame, Bill sprang forward with a yell, tearing his hat, whiskers, wig and all from his head to the floor amidst shouts of rude laughter and screaming. Yet as startled as he had been by the alarming and ludicrous accident, his discomfiture lasted only the moment it cost him to disengage his head from the flaming bush, when leaping forward he cried, "Padilla—seize him—the sailor!"

Quick as Bill had been, Padilla was his equal; for the instant the wig and whiskers disappeared, he recognized his old oarsman of the Mississippi, and levelling a pistol at him, fired, but fortunately without effect.

All the officers and our friends ran toward him, some people rushed up the stairs; the women screamed, and the saloon was involved in total darkness the moment the report of the pistol was heard in the cellar above.

The confusion that ensued can be far better imagined than described. There were over three hundred people in the vault and but one way of egress from it. There were heaps of money in gold and silver on the gaming-tables, all of which were overturned in the mad strife to escape from the den, or by those who sought to screen themselves from knives and pistols which every one thought would be freely used. The screams of the unfortunate females, who were knocked down by the surging mass of terrified wretches, were awful; while oaths, curses, imploring and

cries for *help and mercy*, perfected the horrors enacted in this tabernacle of the damned!

Above all the uproar the voice of officer Hays was heard. He told every one to stand still, that the house was surrounded by the police, and he only wanted *one man* named Padilla; that no harm should come to any one else. Then he called loudly for lights, and the alarm whistle sounded shrilly through the vaulted cavern. In the midst of the confusion, Bill and Snappy, without speaking a word, made for the stairway through the wreck of men, women, children and furniture, well knowing that everything depended on their reaching the upper regions before Padilla, to prevent his escape. They succeeded, side by side, in reaching the stair by dint of many severe blows to disengage the death-like grasp of many terrified wretches who, in their frenzy, caught hold of everything that came in their reach, but the stair was crowded with a cursing and screaming mass of fugitives, completely choking up the way.

"This will never do," hissed Snappy in Bill's ear.

"Never," said Bill. "Let's clear it." And they positively commenced forcing themselves *up* by throwing those in front of them over the banister upon the crowd that had gathered on the dais used by the unfortunate musicians, whose instruments had made their last chord in this mêlée. And while Bill and Snappy were engaged in their new task, we must take a look at the scene above.

The report of Padilla's pistol was not heard by the officers in the street, but it was by the people in the first cellar; and some fellow who was carousing there exclaimed, "there goes a pistol below, and I'm off." *This expression*, the outside guard distinctly heard, for the street was still as death; and drawing their weapons they rushed into the first cellar proclaiming themselves officers, and demanded admission to the lower vault; but there was no necessity for this, for that instant the first of those who

escaped up the stairway, burst through the door into the room, proclaiming that the lights were out downstairs and that the people were murdering each other. Then came the alarm whistle up from the dark depths of the earth, which was shrilly answered by the officers above, and responded to again by a body of the night watch going their usual rounds through the streets. These came down to the aid of the specials, just as the head of the column of flying devils from the hell beneath, came bursting into the lighted cellar.

The officers and watchmen each grabbed a handful, but the tumultuous inpouring soon filled the apartment, when the momentary check given to the human flood by the first few, gave way, and the fugitives rushed upward to the street, flying in every direction.

Amongst those was Padilla, who had no sooner fired at Rankin than, with the agility of a hound, he sprang to the stairway, and was one of the first to gain the public cellar. There he was arrested by one of the officers, from whom he managed to escape during the tumult that soon followed. He had no sooner reached the street, however, when Bill and Snappy came rushing through the passage into the room, exclaiming, as they entered, "*Where's the sailor? Have you got the sailor?*" but the rush for the street was so swift and clamorous, that their inquiries were either unheard or unheeded, and the next moment they were forced up the front steps by the irresistible torrent behind them.

In the vain hope that Padilla had not yet got out of the lower regions, they stationed themselves on either side of the public entrance on the sidewalk, to watch for him, being fully resolved to kill him rather than permit his escape.

As the terrified and wounded wretches reached the street, their yells and groans were horrible to the ear. The bright lamps about the door shed their rays upon the upturned faces as they ascended, and the general appearance of them was sickening

to an extreme. Nearly all of them had their clothes torn in shreds, while streams of blood were dripping from cuts and bruises of every description. One woman, more dead than alive (it was one of those whose singularly retiring and graceful appearance had attracted the attention of our friends), was borne upward by the sweeping torrent, and cast helpless headlong upon the sidewalk. Bill raised her in his powerful arms, and shouting "Look out sharp, Snappy—I'll be back in a minnit," carried the poor painted creature a few doors from the scene of violence, and begged the people who were looking from the door, frightened by the uproar, to take care of her until she recovered; when a sharp-faced, sharp-nosed, sharp-voiced subject, in the person of a woman, said sharply:

"Don't bring any of your murdered prostitutes here. Leave her in the street till the *keriner* comes. *Deesint* people's houses is not to be made a *horspitle* for sitch trash."

"Why, she's a woman, and almost naked, mam!" said Bill, in a voice that plainly showed his tenderness and pity for the sufferer.

"More shame for you," responded the sharp angel, "to bring a naked woman in your arms to the house of a *deesint* married person, you *blagard!*"

This stung Bill to the quick, and he said:

"Oh, you're only a person, are you—a *married person!* Well, I thought you was a *woman*, and had a piece of a heart for another woman when she's sufferin. But you don't know wot I think of you, and it's well you don't, because if you *did*, you'd know jist how fur in hell I wish you was stickin this minnit!"

And with this slightly irregular diapason to his overture, he turned to seek another shelter for his now quivering burden, when a little girl touched him timidly by the arm, saying:

"Bring the poor lady over here; my mother will take care of her." She pointed across the street.

"God bless you, my little chick. I'll tell Rosalie about you the next time I go to the cottage."

He gently laid the woman on a couch, then rushed toward the scene of disturbance; but when he was half way there, he turned and ran back into the house, saying:

"Look here, little one, what's your name?"

"Lucy, sir," answered the little girl, "Lucy Spring."

And once more Bill flew to the cellar. By this time most all the rabble were gone; indeed, *all* who were able to run were off; the few who remained were so much injured that they had been carried up into the air from the vault. There were the officers and Snappy, but no Padilla. After comparing notes, and interrogating the wounded and the employees of the establishment about Padilla, without getting any information, the house was closed, and all the bar-keepers, together with the proprietor, were carried to the watchhouse, to answer for creating a disturbance, whereby many were wounded, by turning off the gas.

The next morning, Rankin and Snappy waited on M. Bremont, and related all that had occurred on the previous night. Both Lucretia and Bremont expressed their astonishment at what they heard, and the certainty of Padilla's being yet in the city fixed more firmly the determination to start homeward on the following Monday.

The news that the murderer, Padilla, had been seen only the night before in the cellar, and had again escaped, spread like wildfire through the city, and some people, who are ever ready to find fault with any administration, asserted boldly that the police winked at his liberty.

A full account of all that happened in the *dark* cellar, written by an *eye*-witness, was published in several papers, and Lucretia's beauty, wealth, titles, and accomplishments, were once more thrown in as bright colors to relieve the dark substance of the *recent "horrible disclosures."*

Lucretia and her two champions now devoted themselves to preparation for departure. Secret visits were made to the Summervilles and Rachael Hawthorne, and a final adieu taken; letters were dispatched to Belleville with full particulars, and on *Saturday* morning a paragraph appeared in (Auld Lang Syne—Old Lang's Sign) the "New York Gazette," to the effect that the *lady Lucretia*, who had been the victim of so much persecution recently, sailed yesterday on the ship Hermion for New Orleans.

This, the reader will at once perceive, was a clever ruse of Bremont's, with a view of deceiving the villain Padilla, and it succeeded admirably, for the scamp saw the notice, and at once took passage in a brig that sailed the same day. But in doing this service to Lucretia, the gallant Frenchman inflicted a plague upon himself, as thus: before noon that day, at least fifty of his friends and acquaintances rushed into his private bureau, and positively abused him for sending the lady away without an *introduction*. Poor Bremont was compelled to deliver himself of more fictitious truths (?) than his ideas of honor and veracity had ever permitted him to believe were resident in his invention. But as he had commenced a deception for a right good purpose, he stuck to his game manfully, and declared that the sudden departure of the lady was caused by the receipt of news of a pressing character and utmost importance to herself.

Now, these fifty friends and acquaintances had *each* promised a dozen ladies an introduction to the countess; and when the news of her sudden departure met their eyes or ears, each one believed herself much abused; and some of them even wept, so mortified were they at having lost the chance of being the *lioness* of every evening party until the following Christmas, by reason of having been admitted, by *special favor*, to the *confidence* of the beautiful foreigner, and consequently, being able to relate a thousand *small facts*—in strict confidence—that she had revealed to no one except the relator.

Lucretia was delighted with the stratagem Bremont had put in force to relieve her from much annoyance, and now that her heart was light and full of love for the absent Monthemar, she looked forward to her reunion with the Bellevilles with the liveliest emotions of pleasure.

The reader is requested to remember, that, in the twelfth chapter, at that period when Joseph Cheathim—having obtained possession of the dressing-case from old Becky Wood, and opened it—I have related that he found a secret drawer, in which was concealed a paper written and signed by Padilla, and which said paper was a confession of his villainy touching the abduction of the infant Lucretia, and the cause of his base conduct. On studying that paper, Lucretia at once discovered the name and parentage of her mother—the deeply-wronged Ephigenia; and it must also be remembered, that in the second chapter, during Padilla's interview with Lucretia, he told her *father's* name, and confessed that he had slain him. In the same interview he also told her that Ephigenia—her mother—was dead.

Thus, then, she now knew who her parents were, and that she was as nobly born as her lover. This discovery, although a pleasing one, created no change in the feelings and sentiments of Lucretia. Adversity had taught her to place no value on any other nobility than honorable, intellectual manhood; and had Monthemar been a commoner instead of a titled nobleman, by the accident of birth, she would have been happy to lay down upon the shrine of her love, the proudest titles earthly kings can bestow. But she could not endure the thought of mounting to the splendid position to which her marriage with Monthemar must lift her, without a country or a name—with Padilla's dark slander on the purity of her blood. And now that the only obstacle to the fulfillment of her brightest hopes and wishes was removed, the last shade of darkness vanished from her bosom, and all was *glorious* light within.

On Monday morning the breakfast parlor of M. Bremont presented a very animated appearance. The table was set out in style, and around it were seated M. Bremont, his daughters, Lucretia, and the three Summervilles. Rachael Hawthorne had been invited, but no consideration could induce her to leave her helpless husband.

I will not pretend to relate the conversations at table, but simply remark that the brilliancy of Lucretia, the pure, polished simplicity of the widow, the naïveté of Rosalie, the deferential boldness of Harry, the playful wit of Bremont, and mirth of his daughters, composed the most delightful reunion imaginable. The only shade that would creep in upon them, was the thought of parting with Lucretia that morning. Promises of a perpetual correspondence were exacted from Lucretia by Rosalie, who promised, loud enough for the whole company to hear, that she would transmit a true and correct statement of her brother Harry's first love fever, with a portrait of the divinity, whoever she should be. At which Harry blushed, and said:

"Rose has no right to speak that way of me. She always gives me lessons about trying to look like a man, and says she is a little woman already. I expect the sly puss will have a beau before *I* will."

But it was of no use for Harry to try and turn the tables upon his mischievous sister; she had made him for the moment the centre of observation; and although he withstood all the playful sallies of the company with his usual self-possession, his handsome face was overspread with a rapid succession of deep blushes, to the boisterous delight of Rosalie and the others.

As the hour approached for starting, the company entered the drawing-room, where the last adieus were spoken. The baggage had already gone under the supervision of Messrs. Snapp and Rankin; the coach having arrived and being ready at the door, Lucretia and Bremont entered it; and looking from the window

of the coach, she had only time to see Rosalie in tears, as it rolled rapidly away.

When they reached the steamboat *Swan* (she was to proceed to Philadelphia by the way of Amboy), at Pier No. 1, North River, the coach door was opened by Snappy the instant the horses stopped, and Bremont alighting, handed the lady to the cabin, and remained with her until the boat started; then, having pressed a kiss upon her peerless brow, bade her God speed, and returned to his home.

The resolution of Lucretia to start homeward under the protection of her two serving-men, when in the course of a week or two, at the furthest, her noble lover would arrive in New York, may seem strange to some; it did so appear to Bremont, but she laughingly evaded his questions for an explanation. But she had a reason for her adopted action, and I think a very plausible one.

She could not conceal, even from herself, the joy she felt at being able to meet and requite Monthemar's love with all his own enthusiasm. And fully appreciating her emancipation from the restraint she had endured, she had resolved to defer meeting him until the presence of Margaret and Elise Belleville should be at her command to act as temporizer to two such glowing spirits. And then she felt, too, that the Bellevilles were justly entitled to a participation in the joy of meeting with her absent lover after so many sharp trials.

On his return home, M. Bremont immediately took the Summervilles in his coach and landed them safely at the cottage. He there met Mrs. Hawthorne, who was on the lookout for their return, to hear of the safe departure of the woman in whose behalf her first active step toward a true reformation had been taken.

At the solicitation of Mrs. Summerville, M. Bremont and Rachael remained to dinner, when the worth and graces of Lucretia were again discussed by her loving friends.

CHAPTER XX.

THE JOURNEY HOME.

WHILE Lucretia is pursuing her way to Amboy on the steamboat Swan, perfectly surrounded by the jealous vigilance of her attendants, or rather protectors, I will embrace the opportunity to inform you that the viscount Henry de Montmorencie, having remained in Paris long enough (after finishing his business) to share the hospitality of the American Minister on the anniversary of our country's birth, or the birth of our Republic, whichever most pleases, started for Havre; and on the tenth day of July sailed from that port for New York, on the American packet ship Rainbow. As there is no doubt in my mind of his safe arrival, after I have made his voyage sufficiently long to enable our heroine to reach New Orleans by the mountain and river route, I shall leave the impatient Corydon to the enjoyment of the light summer winds of the northern Atlantic, at the only period of his life when he had sighed for a tempest from the northeast by east.

As the Swan moved down the glorious bay, unequalled by any other in the world for capacity, depth of water, good bottom, even tides, protection from the ocean, and beautiful scenery, Rankin and Snappy stood upon the after part of the promenade deck to take a parting look at the infant Babylon, the giant city of the new world. There it lay, between the broad beautiful Hudson and the deep, swift eddying East River, tapering grace-

fully as it stretched toward the bay, upon the very verge of which its Battery reposes. They gazed upon the hundred spires that lifted their iron crests toward the clouds, at the domes and cupolas; and each one of them called up in the bosom of the gazers some reminiscence of joy or sorrow. They seemed to the travellers like old companions from whom they were parting forever, while the look of silent grandeur, they appeared to cast upon the receding vessel, smote the voyagers even unto tears.

George Snapp had never *lived* beyond the sound of the old jail bell; and since the vast brazen engine of alarm had rested on the City Hall, he had never *been* beyond the reach of its heavy, reverberating voice. To him there was something unusually solemn in the parting. As each new point stole upon his vision, as if for a parting glance, or look of recognition, the spring and summer of his wayward but not criminal life passed vividly through his mind, and the man of the prize-ring trembled with emotion.

Rankin stole a glance at the face of his friend, and noticed its agitation. He guessed the cause, and being anxious to bring him back again to their hopes, for the future, he endeavored to arrest the current of his reflections and turn them into other channels. To effect this purpose, he touched Snappy gently on the shoulder and pointed to Governor's, Bedloe's and Ellis' islands, just lifting their green tufted heads far enough above the placid waters of the bay to display their beards of bristling cannon to the close observer.

"Yes! I see them, Bill, but will I ever see them again?" said Georgy, in answer to his companion's motion.

"Why! to be sure you will; what's to hinder you? Why, Georgy, you ain't no more a man than I was wen I fust went down the bay on the old ship Europe. I felt then jist as you look now. But Lord love you, Snappy, haint I come back a *better* man than I was wen I went away? I know it's awful hard

to quit the old familiar places ; but wot good has this city of ours ever done for you and me? Why! it give me life with neether father ner mother, and so it made me nobody. It give me the chance of stealing or starving, or, wot is much wurse than eether, fighten like a dog for the benefit of any gambler who didn't have no better feelin than to set one man's life against another for his pastime and profit. That's wot it done for me. Now, how is it about you Georgy? Why, you was a butcher and a good workman, you got good wages and used to go to Conway's dancing-school, and pass all the winter nights at balls with respectable people, and your summer ones at the Prentices' Libry, or goin to Wauxhall with your sweetheart. Well! Reub Bunn seen you spar one day, and tells some of the chaps in Park Row about you, and they takes you from your honest trade to make a blagard gentleman of you. They told you a boy of your science and game could make a pile in the ring, that they would all back you against anything of your weight ; that you was the handsomest *light one* they ever seen when you peeled for a set-to. Now, I heered all this, and when I seen your eyes sparkle at wot they said, why, I was delighted, and took you by the hand as one of 'em ; and a good one too. But wot come of it? They made a fight on you, and you won it. Then you won another, and another ; and then you got almost killed in your last match, and all the blacklegs swore you threw 'em off, and not one of 'em ever come near you or sent you the first red but Pete Dobbs, and he's the only one in the whole party that has a kind heart. Sence that time you ain't done no respectable bisness, but jist hung around waiten to be took in favor agin ; and if you was, it would end the same way agin, or maybe wurse ; for if you was to git smashed up as not to be able to come to the scratch again, why, you'd be left like an old wore out dog to die in the street. Now, ain't it true? Now, look at me! I've bin everything bad but a thief or swindler and a murderer ; thank God I never was any

of them. I won't say anything about your chances and mine in the world; but—you had a—a mother, Georgy, and I never know'd wot one was. You was learn'd to read and write, I never was. You got a good trade, and I shovelled snow and carried in wood for a livin till the sportin men took me up; and now I'm a gentleman. Yes, Snappy, I am. I would not engage in a prize-fight or do any other mean or blagard action to save myself from starvin. I know that I am a man and no brute; and if I ain't got no education (and may God forgive them that cast me out when I was a baby), I've a sound heart and some sense; enough to know right from wrong, and to make me happy when ever I think, that from the day that angel woman made me look into my own heart, I ain't done no act to make me blush for shame, or wot a gentleman mightn't be proud of. And I *won't* do one neether, to the end of my life, because I want all the rough about me to be worked down. And mind what I tell you; if I live to be an old man, I'll *snuff out* as smooth as a rollin-pin. Now, Snappy, let's turn our backs upon the past and look forward to an honest, industrious independence. We're both young and upon the right road *sure;* and if we only stick to it as faithfully as we stuck to them that come near makin savages out of us, we're *bound* to be honorable members of susciety."

"Rankin! give me your hand," said Snappy, "I've got a better lesson from you this mornin than ever I did in school, and if I don't learn it by heart, call me no longer your friend."

Then, turning sharply again to the dim distant city, he took his hat off and waving it, he continued:

"Good bye, my home! I leave a good old mother within your walls, but *she's* not sufferin, and is glad to see me go abroad. And when I *do* come back, she shall be proud of the boy who has made her weep so many bitter tears."

At that moment, Lucretia and several other ladies came on the upper deck of the boat to get a better view of the city and har-

bor. She saw at a glance that her champions had been excited, and readily imagined the cause. Bill and Snappy saw Lucretia the moment she came on the promenade, and taking their hats off (poor Bill's first idea of gentility) they walked to the side of the vessel to give the party place.

"Your *people* are exceedingly well bred," said a lady with thin lips, aspiring nose, almost no chin, and, as Lucretia soon found out, very large fortune. "Where did you find them?"

"*They* found *me*," said Lucretia, with an enchanting smile. "I owe my life and present happiness to those two men. I have found their service invaluable."

"Have they been long in you service? They don't dress like servants; where are they from—the city?" said the same lady, without taking a breath.

"The larger one, who is my steward, has been in my employ since January; the other entered my service recently," replied Lucretia. Then, as if desirous of cutting short the impudence of her very new acquaintance, she turned to the captain, who accompanied them, and made some inquiry about the bay, the shipping and the scenery, of an entirely unimportant character; for the grandeur of the view filled her with thoughts too pleasing to be wasted in words upon her hearers. She remained on deck until the Swan entered the *Raritan*, when she retired.

"Did you hear whot she said, Snappy?" said Bill.

"Well, I did!" was the reply.

"And what do you think?" was the next question.

"Why! that it's no wonder you're conwerted, for *her* woice is sweeter than a bird's, and whot she says goes right to the heart; and if we don't land her safe in Noo Orleens, why, we ought to hang ourselves."

Amboy and Philadelphia were reached in safety, the latter city by six o'clock, and although Lucretia was fatigued by the recent excitement and her journey, her baggage was no sooner

safe in her room, than she instructed William Rankin (Jones no more) to procure a coach, as she was determined to ride to the Fairmount water-works before night. Her orders were obeyed, and she returned to the hotel, fully compensated for her trouble. Rankin had gone on the seat with the driver.

Next morning, the journey was continued without accident to Baltimore, the city of monuments. Here the balance of the day was consumed by riding about the city, and the night devoted to rest; for Lucretia had well calculated that she would require all her strength to reach Brownsville, on the Monongahela River, at the western base of the Alleghanies.

On the morning of the third day, very early, they started for Cumberland, and as the railroad was not yet completed, she, with two other ladies, their husbands, and two attendants, passed the night in a four-horse stage coach, and arrived at Cumberland about eight in the morning. This caused a halt for repose, and on being informed that she could have an extra coach at any hour she wished, on paying for a full load, she determined on some sleep after breakfast, and commencing the ascent in the cool of the evening, for the purpose of getting a sunrise view from the top of Cumberland Mountain, if possible.

Breakfast was served, after which the travellers retired to their rooms, and slept soundly. At three o'clock, they were awakened in obedience to orders, had dinner, and at six the coach with Lucretia, the only inside passenger, Rankin on the box with the driver, and Snappy on the top, all the men smoking cigars, commenced their passage over this beautiful range of mountains. The road from Cumberland to the foot of Laurel Hill, on the western base, at a little settlement (then) called *Uniontown*, is broad and level on its face, giving an easy motion to the coaches that traverse it. The tedium of ascending a vast hill is always compensated by the view from its summit. The moon was at its full, the weather clear and calm, and as

each new crest was gained, higher than the last, the changing view became more exquisitely beautiful, and although Lucretia was no daughter of romance, the glories of nature by which she was surrounded, bathed in the soft light of a summer's moon, which gave to glen and valley, and the distant peaks that reared their proud crests grandly toward earth's universal dome, the light and grandeur of supernal beauty, filled up the soul with rapture. Her gentle spirit revelled in the enchantment of the scene, until the closing shadows of a deep valley, into which the cradle coach was plunging, shut out from her closing eyes the realities, to renew them more brightly in her slumbers. Lucretia slept and wakened not, till the coach stopped at the baiting-place on the head of Cumberland Mountain.

The instant the motion of the coach ceased, she awakened, and thrusting her beautiful head through the coach window, burst into an exclamation of delight and wonder at the scene she beheld.

The sun was an hour high, and his rich golden rays had displaced the silvery flood of night, beneath the drowsy influence of whose murmuring zephyrs the denizens of the air and forest had slumbered while she gazed. But now, they had awakened, and a thousand feathered songsters, in wanton joy, were hailing with merry choruses, each blush of radiance from the rising morn.

Rankin was at the coach door in an instant, when the charmed maiden descended and rushed to the very verge of the noble mountain, bareheaded as she was, and extending her arms and hands eastward, exclaimed in a rapture:

"Oh, *this* is a fairy land!"

Then she sank upon the deep green living velvet, and gazed upon the miles of valley opened to her view, in an ecstasy of delight and wonder.

It was indeed a fairy land she beheld. The gold and purple

streams of light poured into the valley, gave birth to a thousand rainbows on the lower air, yet misty from the countless cataracts that burst from the hills on every side, impetuous to the depths below; sighing in their flight, and heaving upward vast columns of snowy vapor like monuments, to mark the place of their repose.

She turned to the west, and all was like enchantment *there*, too. The aspiring peaks were capped with gold, while down their ruddy sides, the loftiest trees, catching the glorious light, sent back its rays with all the flashing brilliancy of the diamond, amethyst, and emerald.

Just then a little warbler sailed from a neighboring tree, and carolled sweetly as he passed her, when a fierce hawk darted in pursuit. The little songster saw its danger, and, giving a wild shriek, plunged into the valley, followed by its swift and relentless enemy. She strained her eyes downward, but the pursued and pursuer were lost in the vast void beneath her. As she raised her eyes again, a fierce grey eagle, that had been quietly resting on the limb of a blasted ash, suddenly plunged to the ground, and the next instant rose high in the air with a hare in his talons. Lucretia marked *his* way. When he had by a slow winding course upward, gained an elevation above the surrounding trees, with the speed of lightning he darted across a deep glen and rested on a rocky projection from the mountain side, not two hundred yards distant. He stooped for a moment over his prey, then stepping boldly to the verge of the dizzy height, extended his vast wings several times, and plucked his feathers with the air of a proud conqueror.

Lucretia sighed, and fixed her gaze once more upon the vale beneath.

Messrs. Snapp and Rankin had not been dead to the beauties which had enrapt Lucretia, but by far the finest feature of the scene, to them, was their mistress and her enthusiasm. They

stood at a very respectful distance gazing upon the wondrous beauty of nature, but always commenced and ended their surveys with Lucretia. They spoke not, but often cast a meaning glance at each other, as some new beauty awakened a fresh interest in their idol. Soon after the eagle's foray, the driver of the coach—who having fed and watered his horses, and for the last half-hour had been kicking his heels against the lower spoke of the rude bench on which he was seated, wishing for *his* breakfast, and wondering what the great lady could possibly see about the hills and valleys to make her forget that she had not eaten a mouthful since the day before, at four o'clock P.M.—came up to Bill, and, in a very good-natured manner, considering how hungry he was, told him he was only allowed to stop one hour for breakfast, and that his time was up already, and they had not taken the first bite yet.

Bill replied, it could not be helped, the madam was *werry* busy just then, and must not be disturbed.

The driver said he did not care for himself, but if they stayed there much longer it would be night by the time they reached Laurel Hill, and it was as much as a man's life was worth to start down that mountain after sundown.

"Why, wot's the danger of that perticular hill?" said Bill, with his ears wide open.

"Oh, nothin," said the driver, "only it's four miles down, and nairy stoppin place 'twixt the top and bottom—that's all; and if anythin gives way, why, over we go into one of them beautiful pits the lady is lookin at so—hosses and all."

Rankin started at what he heard, and said:

"We'll have breakfast right off—I didn't think it was so late."

Saying which, he walked up to Lucretia, who was still seated in the same spot, and with his hat in his hand, said:

"If you please, mam, I'm main sorry to break in on your

thoughts, for they *do* seem to do you so much good; but the driver says we must git to Laurel Hill before night, or we'll be pitched down in one of them walleys."

Lucretia rose to her feet and smilingly said:

"I expect the poor fellow is waiting for his breakfast, while I have, very inconsiderately, been thinking of nothing but the enchanting scenery around us."

"Not at all, mam—not at all. If I thought he dared to get hungry before you did, I would turn him off the coach and drive myself. But I do really think this Laurel Hill must be a bad spot, and the sooner we git safe to the bottom of it the better—that's all, mam."

Lucretia was fully satisfied with Bill's explanation, and was soon seated at a rude but rich breakfast, to which her attendants were delighted to see her do ample justice. When she had finished, the men sat down, and the activity they displayed with their knives and teeth, forced our heroine to the conclusion, that a fierce contest must have been for some time raging between their appetites and politeness.

However, when the gentlemen *did* begin, they all seemed to have forgotten the perils of Laurel Hill. The clock striking ten, roused them from their labors, and starting from the board—each one securing something for a lunch on the road—the bill was paid, the parties in their places, and the coach once more moved forward on the journey.

Throughout the whole day Lucretia's eyes did not close, such a charm did she find in the wild beauty of the scenery along the entire route. At four in the afternoon, they reached the relay station, at the eastern base of Laurel Hill, where fresh horses were placed to the coach, while Lucretia walked about for exercise, and partook of a glass of soft Spanish wine and a biscuit, a store of which M. Bremont had supplied Bill with, for use on the road. She declined having any dinner prepared,

being informed that in two hours she would be in *Union Town*, where excellent accommodations could be had—they being at that moment only seven miles distant from that place, with Laurel Hill alone between them.

On went the coach, winding slowly up the mountain, the driver resting his horses every ten minutes, by catching his carriage with an immense iron shoe fastened to the back axle, and after an hour and a half's desperate tugging, they reached the crest of the hill. *There*, was a spring, with cocoa-nut shell dippers for men to drink from, and a set of buckets for the noble horses that toiled across the mountain; and so well do these animals know when the weight of the journey is over, that on reaching the summit of this famous mountain, they never fail to express their satisfaction by loud neighing, snorting, and playful motions of their heads and legs.

At this point, according to custom, the driver gave his horses a drink from the spring, and fifteen minutes' repose before starting on the *downward* trip; and it may be well to observe here, that if dragging a coach, passengers and baggage *up* this mountain tries a horse's strength and activity, being *pushed down* the western declivity by a coach, passengers and baggage, equally tries his courage and bottom. The distance from the crest of this hill to Union Town at its foot, following the windings of the road, is about four miles. The moment you commence the descent, you are flanked on the right by an almost perpendicular wall formed by the making of the road, and on the left by the most frightful chasm man ever looked into, along the verge of which a slight barrier is raised to prevent a *wheel* from *slipping* off, but offering no obstruction whatever to a flying leap of a horse, or the graceful overturning of a stage coach.

The descent is so steep, that if you were to start any four-wheeled carriage, loaded, or empty, at the top, and make it possible to guide it in such a manner as to prevent a collision or an

upset, the velocity it would attain before reaching the bottom, would be as great as that of the swiftest flight ever made by a steam engine over a railroad.

The coaches employed on this road are built with a powerful *brake*, which, on being pressed by the foot of the driver (a lever for the purpose being rigged so as to rest on the right side of the foot or dash-board) firmly locks the back wheels to prevent their turning, by which the coach is prevented from running over the horses. It must, therefore, be observed that if the arrangement for checking the way of the coach, should give way during the transit, the voyagers would stand a much better chance of making an involuntary excursion to the Valley of Hades, than John Charles Fremont did for the Presidency. But to proceed:

The horses being rested, the driver carefully examined the brake of the coach, and the breeching of the horses; and being satisfied that all was right, he took a tin horn from his box-seat and blew several blasts which awakened a thousand echoes among the hills and startled the drowsy owls from their repose with unearthly shrieks and hootings. This feat is always performed here, to notify all upward-bound travellers to *look out and keep to the right* A fresh wad of tobacco then found its way between the jaws of the driver, who mounted his seat, took the *ribbons* in his fingers, and in a jocose way, said: "Here we go down, down, downy," as he took a fly from the postern of the off leader with the whip.

Mr. Rankin maintained his place by the driver, while Snappy had mounted on the boot, as he said, the better to balance the coach. Everything went on smoothly enough until the coach was within about four hundred feet of the bottom of the slope, where another piece of land took a gentle rise, on which Union Town is located, when the brake gave way with a crash and the coach gave a sudden dart forward.

Lucretia gave a slight scream; the driver said, "Set still," and planting his whip with a tremendous crack between the flanks of

his leaders, gave head to the team, who flew with race-horse speed down the balance of the descent, barely keeping clear of the carriage. After a minute of intense agony for the result, the hollow was gained and the noble horses bounded up the gentle rise with an instinctive sense of the danger they were escaping by the effort; and in another instant they stood covered with foam and trembling with terror, but safely, at the hotel door.

Bill and Snappy were at the door of the coach in an instant. Lucretia alighted and walked firmly through the hall of the building into the parlor. Her face was calm, but much paler than usual. She was waited on immediately by a female attendant to whom she announced her intention of remaining until morning, ordered supper, and requested that her *steward* might be sent into the parlor to her.

Bill left Georgy to see the baggage safely into the house, and attended Lucretia's summons, trembling lest something should be wrong. As soon as he entered the room and noted the serene smile he knew so well, his fears vanished.

"William, I wish you to see our driver and his horses doubly well cared for till morning, for they richly deserve it. Take this piece of gold to the driver, and tell him I send it to him as a trifling token of my admiration for his presence of mind—if he had been a fool, *we* would have been crushed to death."

"Why, Lord love you, mam," said Bill, all amazement, "how did you know anything about it? I mean about the danger?"

"No matter how, but I *did* know all about it, and was terribly frightened too, I assure you. Now, go at once, and afterward see that all the baggage is placed in *your* room, except the green trunk, which you will instruct the chambermaid to have placed in the room designed for me, without delay."

Rankin looked at her, then at the gold, rolled up his eyes and left the room, muttering to himself: "Well, that beats me, and she shet up inside all the time, too—well, well!"

After a hearty supper, an excellent repose, and a breakfast, from which no fruit of the season was absent, the coach was once more in requisition for the last stage of her journey by land. Without any incident worthy of notice, they reached Brownsville, a thriving *little* town, *then*, on the Monongahela River, about one hundred and ten miles above its confluence with the Alleghany, at which point the rapidly expanding city of Pittsburg stands, in time for dinner. Here, her charter of the coach expired, and the driver was dismissed with a kind expression of thanks from Lucretia, for the skill he so opportunely displayed on Laurel Hill.

The same evening a passage was procured on a steamer, and the next morning, when our travellers opened their eyes, they found the boat quietly made fast to the smoky, hammering city of manufactories, the growing pride of the old Keystone State. The city was examined from the window of a hackney coach, and at five in the afternoon the party began the voyage down the Ohio River on the steamer *Republic*.

As the two previous nights' rest had completely recovered Lucretia from the effects of rather rough land travel, she resolved to gratify her taste for the beauty and grandeur of nature by viewing the romantic borders of the Ohio, between Pittsburg and Wheeling, by moonlight. She would have preferred travelling over this portion by day, but was informed that all the downward boats left the city in the evening.

Her resolution being formed, her *steward* was summoned to the after cabin, where there were three or four lady passengers besides Lucretia, and notified to be in readiness immediately after supper to do sentry duty on the hurricane roof of the boat. This was good news to both Bill and Snappy, who did not like the idea of sticking in the gentleman's cabin till bed-time ; and they certainly had no thought of removing themselves any further from the person of their charge.

As soon as the supper was over, our champions presented

themselves at the after-cabin door with all the coolness of soldiers on duty at their general's tent. The captain, whose wife was on board, was in the ladies' cabin preparing the party for the upper deck, and in a few moments they were promenading the roof of the boat. The evening was beautiful and calm, nothing to break its perfect stillness but the sharp roar of the escape pipe, and the low rumbling of the propelling wheels rushing through the water.

Much of the beauty of this portion of the Ohio River was lost to Lucretia by the absence of daylight; yet there was something so sublime in the appearance of the picturesque hills that rose like giants from the very bosom of the placid waters—catching the soft light of the moon through the interstices of the crowning forests or wild openings through the hills, that her soul swelled with the liveliest emotions of pleasure.

Her unpolished but faithful guardians also enjoyed the scene; but they had a decided advantage over our heroine, for she saw only the scenery, while they had *her* as a centre-piece to the surrounding beauties.

It was past midnight when the party went below, and a moment after, the attendant of the ladies' cabin told Rankin that the lady would not require his services longer that *evening*. Then adjourning to the boiler deck, they regaled themselves with a cigar and went to rest.

The river was not full, yet it was in good boating order in consequence of the spring rise in all the great southwest and western rivers having been late in season, consequently the voyage was uninterrupted except by the delays occasioned by taking in way passengers and fuel.

Although Lucretia derived much pleasure and information from the voyage, it was a matter of regret that her haste to rejoin her dearly beloved friends in New Orleans deprived her of the pleasure of visiting all the beautifully located and thriving towns that dotted the hundreds of miles of mineral wealth and

fertile valley through which the waters of the beautiful Ohio find their way to the ocean. At Cairo the first section of her river voyage ended, the Republic being bound up the Mississippi to St. Louis.

At the time of our history, the city of Cairo contained a house which somebody *had* lived in, a few edifices of the barn or stable style, though in very bad order for use, and three wharf-boats. Those who from childhood to this moment have always considered the study of geography a *bore*, are respectfully informed that Cairo is in the State of Illinois, at that point where the Ohio River is swallowed by the old Mississippi. The point on which the city *stood* (upon the plan) being subject to an occasional cold bath from a heavy rise in the Ohio and Mississippi at the same time, is probably the reason why its projectors baptized it *Cairo* after the ancient city of the *Nile*. Some years later, when steam carriages began to traverse the country in every direction, the geographical advantages of this point did not long escape the notice of the genius of internal improvement that had commenced its march through the land. At all seasons of the year, the Mississippi River is navigable from the Gulf of Mexico to the mouth of the Ohio, which, during about six months in the year has but from sixteen to twenty inches of water on the almost innumerable sand bars between its mouth and Louisville, entirely closing navigation, and thereby clapping a perfect stopper on the vast trade and travel of that region of country, during its season of emptiness. This disadvantage was seized upon by the capitalists of the North, who began stretching their iron roads to the West, with a view to opening a direct trade with that golden section of the Republic, until their commendable enterprise was checked by the mountain barriers which shut them from the rich valleys beyond. During this time, the West had been rapidly increasing in population, wealth and importance and the time had arrived for her people to move forward in the march of improve-

ment, and to gather to themselves the benefit of those blessings they inherited from the bounteous hand of nature. Railroads were demanded direct from Cincinnati to the Mississippi, from the mouth of the Ohio to St. Louis, and from St. Louis to Cincinnati; and Cairo presented itself as the most eligible point on which to rest one base of the gigantic scheme. The work commenced, and to-day is finished. The fertile State of Illinois—its southwestern extremity resting at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, its northeastern point adorned by the city of Chicago and kissing the sweet waters of Lake Michigan, is traversed from those two points to its very centre by a vast trunk road with branches stretching from the main line, to almost every point of the compass. The upper Mississippi, the Ohio and the Illinois rivers, and *all their tributaries refuse now their floods in vain.* Millions of acres from their thitherto remote position, *then* useless, are now teeming with the rich reward of labor. Vast wildernesses have disappeared beneath the rapid strides of enterprise, and the great basin of the West, with unexampled increase, continues, and must ever continue, to pour its rich products into foreign markets from the golden horns of the *Crescent City. Cairo* is *now* beginning to be well known. And now we resume again.

Our heroine, her baggage and protectors were placed safely on the wharf boat (the hull and cabin of an old steamboat fitted up into a kind of hotel), with the tiresome information that probably during the day or night some boat bound to New Orleans would come along. Now, the reader must remember that on or about the first of August, a very limited number of boats find their way to the lower country, it being the dull season for trade and the busy one for painting and repairs. Nothing annoyed, however, by the slim prospect of a speedy departure from the *floating palace* in which she found herself cooped up, Lucretia took possession of her quarters with the *sang froid* of a veteran tra-

veller, and inquired of the waiting-maid when dinner would be ready. There being no other passengers waiting for a trip to New Orleans, Lucretia had the ladies' cabin (or parlor) to herself, with the exception of the landlord's(?) wife, a splendid specimen from the Buck Eye State, who made herself as agreeable to the "*dark beauty*," as she called Lucretia, as a frank, honest heart was capable of.

During her travel from New York, Lucretia had not been so fortunate as to be brought into contact with any of the rough diamonds of the valley west of the mountains, until she arrived at Cairo; and the mistress of the boat hotel was a gem of the first water.

Mistress Harrison (that was her name) was about five feet ten inches high, and as beautiful a woman in face and form as a man could wish to look upon (or look up at, if the man were small). Without the aid of art, beyond the simple neatness of a country-bred maiden of good taste, the pure symmetry of her figure was both grand and beautiful. She was a blonde, whose brilliant red and white complexion, as lively as the morning rose and lily—her melting, deep blue eyes, and silky, flaxen hair, would have stolen the hearts of half the beaux on Broadway, could they have seen her. The most remarkable feature in her character was her total ignorance of her own personal charms. She thought Lucretia was beautiful, and told her so while assisting her to change her dress—a service, she said, she never permitted the chamber-maid to perform, when the passenger was *unmistakably a well-bred woman.*

This was the most delicate ovation she could have possibly poured into the soul of Lucretia, who would rather by far have been so judged than considered a princess.

"How far have you travelled, madam?" said Mrs. Harrison, smoothing the lace collar that Lucretia had just fastened around her neck.

"From New York."

"And are you not afraid of the yellow fever in New Orleans?"

"Oh no; I am a resident of that city."

"You are not a Creole of Louisiana?"

"How know you that?" said Lucretia, turning with a smile to her hostess.

"I confess I don't *know* it, yet *I* should have taken you for a Spanish woman. But I hope you don't think me impertinent; I rarely ask questions of strangers, but there is so much inviting good nature and confidence about you, I cannot help it. You may question me as much as you please, and I'll be very happy to tell anything I know."

"Then tell me if all the ladies in this section of country are as agreeable as yourself with strangers?"

"Do you think me agreeable? Now I am glad of that; for, do you know, that husband of mine is constantly fighting with me for being, as he says, very disagreeably familiar with people that I like."

"And how do you get out of the battle?"

"Why, I laugh, to be sure, and tell him if I had waited for *him* to become familiar with any one *he* liked—and I'm sure he loved me—I would have been a blue-stocking to this day. Then he will smile a little and call me a *bad creature*, and end the battle by asking me to kiss him."

"And I suppose you obey like a good wife."

"Do you do so?"

Lucretia colored to the eyes, which she averted from the blue gaze fixed upon her, and answered:

"I am not a wife."

Mrs. Harrison broke into the merriest fit of laughter imaginable, and said:

"That's just what I've been dying to know from the moment

I first looked at you, and I was ashamed to ask. But you soon will be, I know."

"*How* do you know?" said Lucretia, pleased, yet a little embarrassed, her eyes yet fixed on the floor.

"Because you have not looked at me once since I asked that question, and because somebody *must* love you dearly—I mean some man."

"My guardian, I suppose."

"Guardian! fiddlesticks!" interrupted Mrs. Harrison. "I know better. But it's none of my business, I know, yet I should like to see him."

"Supposing such a person to exist, *why* would you like to see him?"

"Merely to know if he could get *my* consent to the match if I were *your father*."

This was too much for the little gravity Lucretia had been able to maintain during the last few moments, and she laughed as long and loud as her jovial companion. After recovering a little, Mrs. Harrison ran out from the parlor into the gentlemen's cabin (I mean saloon) and said—a spark of deviltry flashing in either eye:

"There's my Charley, with a face as long as my arm, wringing his hands in perfect despair at his wife's disagreeable good nature. Oh! but won't I punish him for it!"

"You must not vex a man who loves you so much," said Lucretia, smiling.

"Why, the man's a perfect villain! If I refuse to set myself down in the midst of a set of old grannies whose heads are as dull as a green pumpkin, he says I'm as proud as Juno; if I *do* find somebody who is charming, and give a little head to my happiness at the discovery, he says I talk too much for my own good, that I expose myself to censure. Now, I'm determined to punish him for his absurdity."

"You surely will not do anything to wound his feelings," said Lucretia, seriously.

"*Wound his feelings?* not for the world; bless his heart, he's too good to deserve that. I only intend to correct one of his errors."

And a laughing devil peeped out from her eyes as she spoke. Shortly after, dinner was announced by the ringing of a bell that might have been heard a mile off; and when we consider the company was composed of Captain Charles Harrison, his wife Kate and our heroine—Bill and Snappy having arranged to eat at the second table with the officers of the hotel (boat)—a less vigorous announcement would have been more acceptable to the travellers.

The captain walked to the door of the parlor, *done up* as nicely, *en toilette*, as if he had a hundred head of damsels to serve and attend to. The ladies rose and approached him, his wife observing, as she did so:

"Why, Charley, where's your gloves? Is it possible you intend to hand in all this youth and beauty with bare hands?"

Captain Harrison was a noble-looking fellow, with a nature as noble as his personal appearance. He was about thirty years of age and four years his wife's senior. He was devoted to his *Kate* and his business. He was a thorough river man, and by his exertions had risen to be captain and owner of a fine packet between Louisville and St. Louis. During the previous winter he had the misfortune to lose his boat near the Grand Tower rock in the Mississippi. The vessel was a total loss and only partly covered by insurance. This being the third severe loss he had met with in a short period of time, he changed his business by investing his remaining capital in the wharf-boat at Cairo, where, during the season, he was beginning to do a thriving business in receiving and forwarding freight, and accommodating passengers who were compelled to land there and wait for a boat.

He was a very modest, but not a diffident man, extremely correct in his business deportment and not much given to levity. On

receiving the salutation of his wife, his face became crimson, but not with anger. He looked at Lucretia and said very mildly, smiling :

"Mistress Harrison is in one of her gay humors to-day, madam, and I assure you it would afford me sincere pleasure if I were not apprehensive of the bad effect it may have upon a lady weary from travel." They seated themselves.

"Why, Charley, you smooth-tongued hypocrite," replied his wife, boiling over with mischief, "what were the words spoken by you the moment this lady and her attendants landed? I'll tell you. Now Kate, said you, do me the favor to hold your tongue a little, and don't pester *that* lady with too much of your country genius. Is she not beautiful Charley? *said I. No* said you, not half as handsome as *you* are, Kate"

During this speech, the captain—who knew what was coming—colored up again, shook his head at his wife, winked, and trod on her toes under the table, but all to no purpose; for out came the awkward sentence which he had intended for his wife's ears alone, with a burst of laughter from the ladies and to the utter confusion of the victimized husband.

Lucretia, who keenly appreciated the scene, laughed so immoderately that she was compelled to forego her soup.

The captain continued blushing and smiling, and although pushed very hard, he was not defeated; but waiting patiently until he thought he had a fair chance of being heard, he said with all the blandness imaginable :

"I have no doubt but that the lady (to Lucretia) will fully appreciate the motive of my compliment to another at *her* cost, particularly when that other happens to be my wife!"

"Indeed I do," said Lucretia, still laughing.

"Why, Charley," said Kate, "do you insinuate that you did not *feel* and *mean* what you said?"

"Courtesy, at least, compels me to declare that I was only *jesting*," replied the captain.

"Oh! oh! what a monster!" rejoined his wife, who, turning to Lucretia, continued: "Madam, don't believe a word he says. If I were not a woman of *remarkable* good sense, the flatteries of my husband would make me unfit for anything but a glass case. Why, madam, that fellow could not be convinced that I am not the most beautiful creature in the whole world. Why, he tells me so a dozen times a day. When I go to bed, my weary senses drop into slumber accompanied with a *my dear*, or a *dear Kate;* and when I awaken in the morning, his extravagant affection plunges him into the Irishism of calling me his *sleeping* beauty."

Thus, during the hour occupied at the table, did this admirably assorted couple entertain Lucretia, who, from the beginning, had discovered their fervent love and noble confidence in each other, and could therefore enjoy the scene without being compelled to regret a single unkind cut from either.

The same afternoon the steamer Monarch, from Saint Louis, landed at the wharf-boat, and by sunset recommenced her voyage to New Orleans with the additional weight of our travellers and their baggage; and after a pleasant run of five days, without the happening of any very interesting event, the vessel and passengers terminated their voyage in perfect safety.

The day Lucretia started from New York, she wrote to the Bellevilles. From Cumberland she sent another letter, and a third was dispatched from Brownsville. This last letter contained a glowing description of her passage across the mountains, and fixed the probable period of her return to the Crescent City. The Bellevilles had been on the lookout for her a week before she arrived; but Elise—the blue-eyed spirit of love and joy, from whom we have been so long absent—who was not content with the slow intelligence that creeps commercially along, had placed black Nanny on messenger and scout duty. The overjoyed creature kept up a constant series of excursions from the Hotel Belleville to the Levee, from breakfast-time till dark.

As Elise could not rest when Nanny was either in the house or on the Levee, the poor girl was instructed to come home and report at the end of each hour. Then, if she saw a smoke of a steamer some four or five miles distant up the stream, she would run home with the intelligence, and hasten back to await the arrival. If Lucretia was not on board, the disappointed girl would return to Elise with the unfavorable intelligence graven on her face.

On the morning Lucretia *did* arrive, Nanny had seen a cloud of black smoke in the right direction, and having given the intelligence, was back upon the Levee in due time to await the arrival.

It was a beautiful August day—not a cloud visible—a scorching sun, but a steady, cool breeze blowing from the north, bearing death upon its wings to the unacclimated, and comfort to those who had safely passed through the ordeal of *Yellow Jack*. Business was almost entirely suspended along the Levee, and but few boats were moored at the landing, on which you might have seen, occasionally, a man in his shirt sleeves and broad brimmed panama hat, receiving, at long intervals, a single dray load of freight. The vessel seemed to have no living creature on board, and the entire line of the glittering white barrier, on which, in the business season, so many thousands of human beings are constantly seen rushing in every direction, was almost entirely deserted.

The eager Nanny, with an immense silk umbrella hoisted over her head, stood upon a pile of old timber, at the very edge of the river, watching the approach of the Monarch; and although the vessel was yet half a mile distant, she thought she could see her dear mistress smiling at her.

In a few moments the engine stopped, and the boat rounded gracefully toward the wharf. This change of position brought the starboard side of the vessel near the Levee. Now, it so happened that Lucretia's state-room was on that side of the boat, and

as a matter of course, Bill Rankin and Georgy Nippers had taken up their position upon the boiler deck on the same side. As Lucretia was in the cabin, preparing to land, Nanny saw nothing of her, but the quick eye of the nervous negress recognized Bill in an instant, although he was vastly improved in his appearance; and no sooner *did* she see him, than the certainty flashed upon her mind that her mistress was really on board. She gave a yell of joy that not only drew Bill's attention to her, but brought out Lucretia, who feared some accident had happened. The instant she appeared, a mutual recognition took place between the mistress and slave. The latter gave an involuntary jump, lost her balance, and fell headlong into the river.

As is always the case, a number of persons had gathered about to see the boat land, and among the number was a very tall negro—a stevedore—who was standing close by at the moment of Nanny's involuntary baptism. Stooping down, he seized the uninjured but badly frightened Nanny by the head, and dragged her on the wharf before another could come to his assistance. The dripping servant no sooner found herself safe on the wharf again, than, regardless of her situation, she commenced capering and laughing so extravagantly, that some one in the crowd suggested that the *poor thing* was crazy, and should be taken care of; but Nanny, who saw only her mistress, gave no attention to what was said about herself.

The boat no sooner touched the wharf, than Bill jumped ashore and running to Nanny, gave her a hearty shake by the hand and conducted the faithful and affectionate girl on board to her long-lost mistress, who was waiting in the cabin till Snappy should bring a coach.

Nanny's meeting with Lucretia was one of those evidences of affection between the master and slave so frequently met with in the southern States. She threw herself on her knees at Lucretia's feet, took both her hands, kissed and wept upon them with-

out the power to speak. Nanny was no actress, her emotions and the feelings that provoked them, were genuine. Lucretia knew this, and was touched by the fidelity and love of her slave.

When Nanny found her tongue and a seat, Lucretia was informed of the good health of the Bellevilles and their great anxiety for her return. On telling Nanny she had better go home and get dry clothes, the girl absolutely refused to leave her mistress till she was safe in the house once more.

Snappy soon returned with a coach, into which Lucretia was seated, while Nanny mounted on the footboard behind. Bill and Snappy remained to place all the baggage on a dray and bring up the rear; and in ten minutes more the hack was at the front entrance of Belleville's mansion.

Elise, constantly on the watch, was at the parlor window; and no sooner did her eyes fall upon the shining face of black Nanny standing on the footboard of the hack, than she gave a scream, darted through the hall and down the front steps, in time to catch Lucretia in her arms as she stepped upon the sidewalk.

"In the house, my own sweet Elise, in the house," said Lucretia, as she led her charming pupil—speechless with joy—up the marble steps; but ere they reached the drawing-room door, Margaret and M. Belleville himself had their arms around our heroine. Once in the room, her bonnet and mantle dropped to the floor, while a shower of kisses and tears fell upon her from the enraptured spirits who pressed their hearts to hers.

Some moments passed ere this silent ecstasy gave way to language. Both Margaret and Elise clasped her firmly, their heads resting on her bosom, while Lucretia entwining both with her arms, kissed them alternately, as tears of happiness flowed from her trembling eyelids upon their upturned faces. By the time this first gush of feeling subsided and Lucretia was released from the embraces of her sisters, all the family servants, male and

female, came crowding in the room—their shining black faces lighted up with joy—to welcome back the *queen*—as among themselves she was designated.

Soon after Bill and Snappy arrived at the door with the baggage, which was speedily removed to Lucretia's apartments. Rankin was then instructed to take lodgings in a convenient place, and to wait upon her toward evening for instructions.

And now, while we leave Lucretia to the exquisite happiness of a reunion with her dearest friends, and William Rankin, accompanied by his ever faithful second, searching for a suitable furnished room, let us turn our attention once more to the evil spirit of our story—Pedro Nuñez Padilla.

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO MYSTERIES UNVEILED.

As before related, when Padilla saw the paragraph in the "New York Gazette," announcing the sudden departure of Lucretia for New Orleans by sea, he, never doubting the truth of the statement, secured a passage on a brig (the Ida) and went to sea within fifteen hours after the ship, on which our heroine was supposed to be a passenger.

In his haste to pursue his victim, he had neglected sending any information to his New Orleans agent, or to the gallant McCulloch. Of the latter gentleman, Padilla had such a perfect knowledge, he was half inclined to believe his orders to that worthy, touching the schooner (Lucretia's intended prison) which was to appear at the Chenier Caminada, would not be obeyed; for it had become clear to his mind that the honest Scot would at once conclude his old captain was about to renew the slave-trade; and we have seen that McCulloch did actually arrive at that conclusion. But while Padilla's sagacity saved him from disappointment on the one point, his rage was terrific when—on arriving in New Orleans—he discovered the boldness and extent of the foray the daring Caledonian had consummated. The house was plundered of all its valuable furniture; and what made the matter worse, the pirate had escaped beyond the possibility of detection—Padilla being too much engaged with more important matters to admit of pursuing the delinquent Scot.

In consequence of the light winds which generally prevail in summer along our coast between New York and New Orleans, the brig Ida, with her precious passenger, did not arrive at the Levee until ten days after Lucretia's return home.

Padilla's first step was to inquire for the ship on which he supposed Lucretia had left New York, and to his satisfaction ascertained the vessel had not yet arrived. His next move was to secure furnished rooms in an obscure part of the city. His reasons for doing this, were two—thus : Sandy McCulloch having stripped his house of most all the furniture, a new outfit would be necessary before he could occupy it ; and then he was anxious to keep his arrival in New Orleans as still as possible, the better to carry out his plans of vengeance. Therefore he went into private quarters.

For several days after his arrival, he lay in his lair, prowling about at night, watching for the arrival of the New York packet that was to bring Lucretia once more within his reach. At last the vessel came, and within thirty minutes from the time she touched her berth, Padilla had certain evidence that the announcement of Lucretia's departure by *that* vessel was a falsehood. In the next instant his blood was on fire. A maddening doubt seized upon his mind. Was Lucretia still in New York, or not ? He could not even guess. Bremont's *ruse* had completely baffled him. He cursed his haste in quitting New York before he was certain of Lucretia's departure, then cursed man and womankind, generally, and all the heathen gods for conspiring against him and his desire for vengeance. His rage became so violent at his disappointment, that he rushed from the Levee through the old market into the *Pig and Whistle*, like a crazy man, jostling rudely every one who came within touch, when, just as he reached the counter, he came in contact with a sailor-looking man, who wore a blue and white striped shirt, duck pantaloons, no vest or coat, and a white sinnett low-crowned sailor hat. This citizen, feeling an elbow thrust

unceremoniously, and rather vigorously against his ribs, turned round, exclaiming in no milk and honey humor:

"Port your helm, you d——d lubber, or I'll take that cut-water of yourn clean off."

Now this salutation, accompanied with an angry look from a pair of large, fierce grey eyes, startled Padilla, who turned and stared vacantly into the face of the injured party for an instant, then, with a grunt, turned to the barkeeper for a glass of Vermouth.

"Hog all over, by thunder," said the sailor, with a half indignant and half scornful sneer. "See here, matey, if you wan't three sheets in the wind already, I'd spile that figure-head of yourn, jist by way of larnin' you to steer clear of your betters."

Padilla, who rapidly recovered himself, turned toward the other, and said, with as much steadiness of voice as his recent excitement would permit:

"I ask your pardon, sir; I am not drunk, but I was much excited when I came in here. If I hurt you I am very sorry for it, and hope you will forgive me."

"Why," said the sailor, who was no other than our old acquaintance, Captain Charley Bang, of the American Eagle, "I know your voice; it seems to me we must know each other."

Padilla, who was thoroughly disguised with false nose, whiskers and moustaches, turned a scrutinizing look into the face of Bang, and recognized him in an instant; but as it was no part of his present game to reveal his presence in New Orleans, he mastered the muscles of his face most admirably, shook his head slowly, and said, with an altered voice: "No, sir, we are strangers." Then turning away, he walked leisurely from the bar-room; but no sooner was he in the street than he made such a rapid and skillful retreat, that even if any one had tried to follow him, he must have been baffled in his effort. Capt. Bang was much

altered, too, for the better; yet Padilla would have known him at sight, had it not been for his own bewildering excitement.

Padilla had not left the room more than five minutes, when in came George Snapp and William Rankin, Esqrs., the latter gentleman being so disguised with false whiskers and moustaches, as to defy recognition. Bill was anxious to keep *his* return a secret, the better to lookout for the Spaniard, who, he never doubted, would hasten to New Orleans the moment after he should have knowledge of Lucretia's departure from New York; and thinking he would probably meet some of his old acquaintances about the haunts most likely to be visited by Padilla, he had worn his disguise whenever he went abroad.

As Bill and Snappy entered, Captain Bang had just planted a bright half-dollar on the counter, and demanded of the barkeeper a gin julep, made strong and sweet, with a flirt of orange-flower water to freshen the mint. Bill knew him at a glance, and stepping up to the skipper of the skiff, he whispered in his ear: "Don't call me by name, Bang, but tip us your daddle, my hearty, and I'll jine you in a drink."

To this familiar salutation from such a very unfamiliar face, Captain Bang took off his hat, brushed the curly hair from his brow, and said:

"Well, sunny, you know me, sure, or you couldn't say "*Bang*" with sich a grace; but if you don't come right out flat, and set your signal, I'll be drifting about in the fog till them red whiskers of yourn turn white."

Bill then put his whiskers near the face of his friend, and whispered something. Then the captain gave a whoop that would have startled the owls at mid-day, had he been in a forest. The next moment the friends were in each other's arms. When this rough, but honest recognition was over, George Snapp, Esq., was duly introduced to the captain of the "American Eagle," and the trio did "jine" in a drink to wash down a sentiment from

William Rankin, burdened with much threatened mischief to the body of Drowsy Peter.

As is customary with gentlemen of this description, the two friends were anxious to learn all the news from each other, and in their satisfaction at meeting again after so long a separation, they would probably have exposed themselves in the *Pig and Whistle* had not the ever ready George Snapp suggested, that the centre of some large park would be a safer place to confer in. Yielding to Snapp's suggestion the party walked into the Place d'Armes where Rankin and the captain mutually satisfied each other on all topics of interest. Bill was suprised to learn that all the fishermen at the lake and all the fruit-dealers about the Levee were firmly of the opinion that Padilla was dead, but when he in his turn had explained to the captain all that had occurred in New York, the sudden disappearance and continued absence of Padilla from New Orleans was at once accounted for.

Rankin then requested the captain to keep secret his return to the city, and also engaged him to *keep his top lights open for the Don*, that they might be able to arrest him the moment he should be discovered.

Captain Bang, knowing Padilla's real character now, at once entered into the plans of Rankin, and promised to *nail him* on sight, and bring him in, dead or alive. Bill then gave directions where he could be found, should the captain have anything to communicate, and they parted, after an arrangement to meet on the following evening at Rankin's lodgings. Our friends then returned to their furnished rooms to deliberate on their future plans for the capture of their old enemy.

And now we must turn to Monthemar, and his companion the old Spanish nobleman, of whom we spoke in a previous chapter, as being about to visit the United States in Monthemar's company. In due time the vessel in which they were passengers arrived at New York.

The greeting between Monthemar and Bremont was all that could be desired by the best of friends. The old Spaniard was introduced to Bremont as the Count de Valos, an assumed title adopted by that gentleman for reasons known only to himself and his young friend, the Viscount Henry de Montmorencie. According to arrangement, Bremont did not tell Monthemar anything about Lucretia's visit to New York, nor of the discovery she had made as to the identity of herself and parents, but simply stated that the lady was still with their mutual friends, the Bellevilles, that her general health was good, and that she was probably as anxious for his return as his most sanguine wishes could desire.

The Count de Valos was probably fifty-five or sixty, but old age had overtaken him prematurely from some great sorrow ; and a stranger would have guessed, that time had labored at least seventy winters to chisel the deep furrows that marked his still grand and imposing front.

The anxiety of the young Frenchman to once more behold his charming Lucretia, shortened his stay in New York materially ; for the third day after his arrival in that city, found him and the noble Count de Valos on their way to New Orleans by the very same route Lucretia and her hard-fisted champions had travelled so recently. In due time the travellers reached the Crescent City Monthemar merely lodged his friend in a hotel, then flew to the mistress of his heart with all the rapture and joy his anticipations of eternal bliss with her could awaken in his ardent nature.

The return of Monthemar to the mansion of M. Belleville was all that was necessary to perfect the happiness of its inmates. The meeting of the lovers was a scene worthy of attention. There were no tears, no screams of rapture, real or artificial; but there was a look and one chaste embrace, accompanied by a deep-drawn sigh from either bosom, which assured the throbbing heart its love would live till "the last syllable of recorded time."

For the first moment since her understanding had permitted her to fully comprehend her dreadful situation, Lucretia now tasted real happiness. Beside her was seated her silent, smiling, eloquent lover. Around her were those tried and deeply-beloved friends, on whose gentle affection she had reposed in her moments of sorrow, and under whose sweet, cherishing influence and power, she had attempted and achieved her redemption from the dreadful mystery, which, like a blight in the heart of a flower, had withered her happiness during the spring-time of her existence. Dear Lucretia! no sorrow had been stranger to her bosom; and yet with what a noble energy had she triumphed over them all. Despair had never been her companion; it can never dwell in the heart where virtue, faith, and truth repose. And now that every obstacle to her future bliss was removed, she gave herself to the sweet enchantment of love's soft influences with all the fervor of her impassioned nature.

Her condition in life was soon to change. She would be united to Monthemar; then they would go to Spain and to once glorious Scio, to find the kindred of her unhappy parents. Had not Monthemar told her, *she* should choose their home—that *she* should direct their travels—that the filling of her wishes should be his most cheerful labor. Thoughts like these were swelling in her bosom. The ecstasies that thronged her imagination now softened the sternness of her nature, and she lay subdued, reposing on the altar of love. And yet she knew not all the happiness Heaven had reserved for its long-suffering daughter. However, *we* must not anticipate any event in her history.

The joy of the Bellevilles at the safe and quick return of Monthemar was only equalled by his enthusiasm at being again by the side of his idol, from whom he was never more to part. Elise—whose mischief had all returned with her good health—had now four lovers instead of two, to play upon; for young Hammersly was the accepted lover and affianced husband

of the gentle Margaret, and was constantly at the Hotel Belleville.

When the first greetings were over, Monthemar amused the family with a history of his doings since his departure for Europe, and concluded by informing them that the noble Count de Valos was his companion to America, and that on the following evening he would introduce him there. Then, turning to Lucretia, he said:

"It was this gentleman—this Count de Valos—who gave *me* the cross and chain which I gave you on the morning of our separation. I need not inquire how you have preserved my present?"

"Oh, no!" said Elise; "you need ask no questions on that subject. Chreechy has it fastened on her neck with a miniature padlock, the key of which is either lost or thrown away."

Lucretia blushed; Margaret, Hammersly, and Monthemar laughed, and M. Belleville bit his lips to preserve his gravity, while he said:

"How now, my lady, has your season commenced, with the return of my guest and friend!"

"No, pa," said Elise, "my season commenced with the first month of summer." Then turning toward her sister, she continued: "I believe, Meg, it was about the first of June that you and Mr. Hammersly discovered Heaven had made you for each other?"

It was now Margaret's turn to blush. This information was news to Monthemar, who was well assured of its truth by the downcast eye and crimson cheek of the gentle maiden, as she strove to suppress the confusion created by her mischievous sister.

Monthemar rose from beside Lucretia, and taking Margaret's hand, with most winning grace, said:

"You must forgive your playful sister for her want of ceremony in making *me* acquainted with a fact so interesting to you *and pleasing to me.* For my sake you must not scold our little

mischief. Remember, it will soon be her turn to think of a settlement in life, and then we will show her no mercy."

"Indeed, sir," said Elise, "you are reversing the order of things. I *am* settled in life. Since you and Mr. Hammersly wooed, won, and jilted me for Meg and Chreechy, I have formed a life partnership with pa. Our firm is Leaumont Belleville & Daughter, and we expect to drive a large business in the trade of loving each other. Our capital is all our own, and consequently we anticipate no failure from a sudden abstraction of any portion of our stock in trade."

Hammersly here interfered, and told Elise that if she would only be patient until the company had learned something of the Count de Valos from the viscount—the object of his visit to the United States, if propriety did not forbid—he would engage to lay himself open to attack whenever she felt like it.

Elise said he was far too liberal. Love had already reduced him twenty pounds in the last two months, and if some good-natured friend (herself, for instance) did not soon come to his relief, by winning his mate-dove to fix the marriage day, she feared he would die of cooing.

Belleville prevented our sparkling little elf from pursuing the lovers any further at that time, by urging Monthemar to invite his noble friend, the Count de Valos, to make his hotel a home during his stay in New Orleans, at the same time taking it for granted that young Monthemar had not thought of staying anywhere else. Monthemar preferred making his home beneath the roof that sheltered his heart's idol, and at once accepted the offer of M. Belleville for himself and friend. After a few hours of joy had passed away, during which time Monthemar had endeavored to make the company as happy as he himself was, he took leave and returned to his friend, De Valos.

On the following evening the Belleville's mansion was lighted for company. Its inmates were gay, happy, and full of spirit,

for it was well understood the ceremony that was to unite Lucretia and Monthemar was not very far distant; and our dear Elise had determined that Margaret and Hammersly should be sacrificed to each other on the same altar. Lucretia, however, was strangely affected on this evening. At moments she would be gayer and more voluble than she had ever been known to be previously; and then she would fall into a fit of musing, so deep and solemn, that she was wholly unconscious of the presence of her friends. At one time she broke into the merriest ringing laugh at something Elise had said, and the next instant her head fell upon the shoulder of Margaret, while tears streamed from her eyes. She trembled, and told the sisters to forgive her weakness—that some strange feeling had taken possession of her bosom—that she could not account for either her laughing or weeping. She wished the night were over.

Elise and Margaret begged her to be tranquil, telling her the near approach of her nuptials with Monthemar, and her present perfect happiness had momentarily disturbed her usual serenity—that she had better retire to her apartments to regain her tranquillity before young Monthemar and the Count de Valos should make their appearance. She yielded to the wishes of her charming pupils, and had only reached her own room when the bell announced the arrival of her affianced and his noble, venerable friend.

The graceful elegance of the count's reception by the Belleville, assured De Valos his young friend had not been mistaken in the cordiality of the invitation extended to him to make Belleville's house his home while in the Crescent City. On the other hand, the dignity of the noble Spaniard, softened by the shade of serene sorrow that rested on his yet handsome aquiline features, was enough to restrain undue levity anywhere, but more particularly in the Belleville family, where the story of his sorrow was partly known.

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win vows of everlasting love from him, forbids that I should set before you, in the language of injured innocence, a character with which, in all probability, you have become over-intimate during your recent travel."

"And yet," persisted De Valos, "Monthemar (as you all seem desirous of naming him) told me, only a few moments before entering here, that he could safely defy you now, having told me the entire history of his courtship with the lady Lucretia, even to the pin and needle misadventure."

"A misadventure, truly," said Elise, "to me, poor girl, who that very day had permitted him to squeeze my fingers and kiss my hand, and might have permitted him to raise his lips still higher but for the timely discovery of his monstrous perfidy. But softly! Here comes the unhappy Phillis."

As Elise finished speaking, Lucretia was seen slowly approaching through the back drawing-room. She was clad in white, with no other ornament visible than the jewel Monthemar had given her previous to his departure for France. It was suspended from the curious chain about her neck, and lay sparkling on the snowy bosom of her robe. She had regained, to all appearances, her usual serenity, and came smiling forward to greet her lover and his venerable friend.

The Count de Valos rose as she entered the front drawing-room, and as Lucretia came within the strong light of the brilliant chandelier suspended from the ceiling, he exclaimed: "Oh, merciful Heaven!" and fell to the floor in a state of insensibility.

Lucretia turned deathly pale, and fell upon an ottoman—Belleville and Monthemar flew to De Valos and raised him from the floor to a sofa, while Elise and Margaret ran upstairs for such restoratives as their toilets afforded. Hammersly would have gone for the doctor had he not been stayed by Monthemar, who told him to look to Lucretia, who to all appearances needed as much attention as the insensible nobleman. The young ladies

returned in an instant, and a flacon of perfumed ammonia being applied to the old man's nose, he slowly revived and was raised to a sitting posture. The shock had been so strong upon his nervous system that his eyes yet remained closed; he spoke not, breathed heavily, and large drops of water trembled upon his clammy brow, while his arms hung by his side with the listlessness of death.

And how was it with Lucretia? On an ottoman, nearly opposite the couch on which De Valos rested, she sat with all the rigidity of a statue—pale, cold, still, and beautiful as marble. Her enchanting face wore an expression of deep anxiety, though as fixed and unchanging as if cast by the hand of death. So perfectly was animation suspended, you could not even see that she breathed.

Elise and Margaret were at her side in an instant, and strove to revive their darling sister, but without effect. No words were spoken—the room was still as death. At length the Count de Valos slowly raised his head, and with a dreamy expression turned his gaze full upon the face of Lucretia. His lips moved, but no sound came from them. Lucretia's face suddenly changed to an expression of the most agonizing suspense. She slowly passed her left hand across her brow and leant forward as if to catch a sound from the moving lips of the venerable De Valos, but no sound came. The next instant, a slight convulsion shook him—a struggle arose in his bosom; then slowly raising his left hand and extending it toward Lucretia, he exclaimed in an audible whisper: "Ephigenia, my child!" and again fainted.

To Lucretia, these words were like electricity. As the sound fell upon her ear, she sprang from the ottoman toward the count—no scream, no sound was heard, nothing but one word, "*Father*," escaped her lips, as she fell lifeless in the arms of Monthemar, who had darted forward to catch her.

The sudden revelation by the old Count de Valos, was certainly an event entirely unlooked for by any one present. That

the two inanimate beings now lying in that brilliant drawing-room were father and daughter, there could be no doubt. Padilla had told Lucretia that she was the image of her mother, whose name was Ephigenia, and so certain was Lucretia that Padilla had spoken the truth in this particular, that the reader may remember she said, in a previous chapter, she would go to Spain and seek the family of her parents—that her face would prove her identity and Padilla's villainy. Therefore, while a a thrill of rapture sped through the bosoms of the Bellevilles, Monthemar, and Hammersly, at this sudden transition of affairs, it was immediately followed by a feeling of the most dreadful consternation, lest the noble old man and his long-lost daughter had met, to be denied one single embrace by the arresting hand of death; for neither the count nor Lucretia gave the least symptom of any remaining life.

It is true that Monthemar had told De Valos his love and faith were plighted to a lady whose name was Lucretia Padilla; but Padilla was the name assumed by our old acquaintance, *Drowsy Peter*, when he escaped to the island of Cuba with the infant Lucretia. Therefore, there was nothing in the name of Padilla to awaken any curiosity in the bosom of De Valos. Again, in the second chapter, it must be remembered, that Padilla told Lucretia her mother's name was Ephigenia, and that her father was the Marquis of Calatrava—a noble Castilian. And in that same interview, he told Lucretia he had slain her father at her mother's tomb in Scio. On this point Padilla had been mistaken, and to this period of our history, he was profoundly ignorant of the error.

The Marquis of Calatrava was by every one thought to be dead, but there remained such a freshness about him while laid out in state, the surgeons had ordered him to be left uninterred, in the hope that his wound had produced some nervous suspension of vitality, and not death. This hope was realized. In

three days after the attempted assassination, the compressio. gave way, and life's current once more began to flow. Calatrava slowly recovered from the shock.

It must be remembered, too, that among the nobles of France and Spain, Monthemar was most known, and always spoken of, as the Viscount Montmorencie. And with him, too, the name of Padilla awakened no memories of the past, for Padilla's real name was Carlos Nuñez Ramagosa, with the title of Marquis de Santarim; and as all certain traces of Ramagosa had been lost since his escape from Scio, after his supposed murder of the Marquis of Calatrava, the name of Padilla, in connection with Lucretia, had awakened no surmises as to their identity.

To resume. After some moments had elapsed, the Marquis de Calatrava (for we shall henceforth speak of him in his proper title), and his daughter Lucretia, recovered from the shock produced by this sudden and unexpected dénoûment; and as joy rarely kills or leaves a long-standing pain, the father and his long-lost and deeply lamented daughter were soon tasting the exquisite happiness the return of such a daughter to the arms of a parent hitherto unknown, was calculated to awaken.

Here was a fresh cause for delight to the family of M. Belleville. The liveliest anticipations created by the happy termination of Lucretia's journey to New York, the safe and speedy return of Monthemar, and the restored health of Elise, were eclipsed by the brilliant fortune that had just shed its light upon our heroine. Heaven had tried her sorely; and now that she had proved herself every way worthy of admiration, respect, and love, the gale of adversity had broken, and the sun of happiness burst through the gloomy canopy by which her eventful life had been clouded, with dazzling brightness, lighting up her soul with joy.

It were impossible to describe the scene that followed the restoration of that father and daughter to the full consciousness,

that they lived and were in each other's arms. To God their souls were lifted in mute yet fervent adoration and gratitude for his merciful, protecting power, while their prayers and thanksgivings stole murmuringly to heaven from hearts o'erflowing with sublime devotion and love.

Now, at once, the Marquis of Calatrava embraced M. Belleville's offer to make his home beneath that roof where his daughter had found a father's protection and a sister's love. In the affianced of his beloved friend, Viscount Montmorencie, he had found his only child—his darling Ephigenia; and if it were possible that anything could add to his happiness, it was the certainty that these fresh hearts had mingled into one.

The day for Ephigenia's (Lucretia no more) marriage with Monthemar was fixed by the marquis, whose excitement and happiness was of such an intensity, he seemed to have acquired new life. Taking the lead in providing for the general joy, he proposed that Margaret and Hammersly should be united at the same time. Then turning to Elise, he offered to send to Aragon for a nephew of his, who, he declared would make her a splendid husband. Elise thanked the marquis, with a blush, a shake of her head and a merry twinkle of her eyes, and said she hoped he would not consider her wanting in courtesy for declining his offer, but that she had entered into an arrangement with her father for a life partnership; that by the articles of agreement, sweethearts and wives were commodities not to be admitted into their stock in trade. And now let us leave our friends at the Hotel Belleville, to the happiness awakened by the incidents of the hour, and turn once more to our old acquaintance, Don Carlos Nuñez de Ramagosa, Marquis of Santarim, or *Padilla*, or *Drowsy Peter*, as he has been known through this history.

When we last saw Padilla (for so we shall continue to style him) it was on the day the New York packet arrived at New Orleans, on which vessel he expected Lucretia. We also saw how

he encountered Captain Charley Bang in the Pig and Whistle coffee-house, and how he retreated from that establishment when he once recognized Bill Rankin's old friend.

Well, as Padilla hastened down Ursuline street from the Levee, his rage boiling over at the discovery of the trick played on him by the paragraph in the New York paper relating to the departure of Lucretia from that city, the thought occurred to him that our heroine might possibly be in New Orleans after all; that some of her friends in New York might have adopted the clever device of giving public notice of that lady's departure by ship, when, in reality, she had gone through by some of the land routes, for the plain purpose of throwing him off the track of his victim; for he knew the whole community was aware he had escaped the officers of the law. Now, this thought no sooner entered his mind than his resolution was made. He passed into Royal street, and made directly for the mansion of M. Belleville, with a view to discover, if possible, whether there was any reality in his surmise or not.

Being conscious of the perfectness of the disguise he wore, he marched boldly up to the mansion, and gazed into the windows with an earnestness that certainly would have betrayed him had he encountered Lucretia at either of them; but fortunately, or unfortunately—just as the reader pleases—he saw no one at that time. However, Padilla was not the man to be easily turned from a purpose once resolved on. He therefore walked to the corner above, and after examining the contents of a fancy-store, which occupied him about half an hour, he returned to Belleville's, and once more began peering in at the windows; this time he was more fortunate; for he saw some one pacing slowly up and down the drawing-room. It was Hammersly whom Padilla saw; and he, not knowing who it was, but shrewdly guessing Hammersly to be some young gentleman just making a call upon the ladies, who, in all probability, would soon make their appearance, stood aside from the window that he might not attract attention.

Presently, the windows being all raised to admit the breeze, the noise of opening a door was heard, and Padilla's attention being so attracted, he turned a sharp glance into the room and saw Margaret Belleville enter, and smilingly take the extended hand of Hammersly in her own. The next moment the lady and gentleman seated themselves on an ottoman near the front window. At first their conversation was carried on in so low a tone, that Padilla (who, although looking up the street, was listening attentively) could not catch a word; but his good genius—if a bad man can have such a thing—sent a third party into the drawing-room in the person of Elise. This put an end to the tender strain that had been adopted by the lovers when they had found themselves alone, and the conversation at once became general, and loud enough for Padilla to hear every word spoken. Thus, it was not long before Padilla learned Lucretia had returned to New Orleans. That was enough. He did not care to wait any longer there, in the hope of seeing her, but turning hastily from the mansion, made the best time in reaching the Mint, where he paused to reflect a little on the news he had gained. While in this mood, he walked several times around the Mint, and then as if tired by his exercise, he seated himself on an empty box at the rear of the building, directly opposite Gallatin street, and in a moment was buried in the deepest thought. And here, a few words of comment are necessary for the benefit of the reader who happens to be unacquainted with the celebrated localities in the Crescent City, or with the city itself.

Gallatin street is situated in the lower portion of the second district of New Orleans. At the *time* to which our history relates, New Orleans had just been divided into three municipalities, each having a separate and perfectly independent board of common council to conduct its municipal affairs, and all the offices and officers of a perfectly organized city, with the following exception: There was a general city council formed by delegates from the

different municipalities, possessed of very limited powers, and over this body the mayor presided. The present second district was then the first municipality, geographically.

Gallatin street begins at the lower end of what is generally termed "the old French market," and ends at the United States mint (a distance less than three hundred yards), and lies between Old Levee street and the front Levee, extending longitudinally with the Mississippi River, and distant from it about two hundred feet. The street itself is narrow. The houses, on both sides, are three and four stories high, and built of brick. They were generally occupied as rum-shops, low sailor boarding-houses, dance-houses for the most dissolute of both sexes, and houses of prostitution and crime. And even at the present day, its character is very little, if any, improved.

The reader can readily imagine what style of characters could be found in Gallatin street. If you wished to have somebody's brains knocked out, or a few throats cut, or a knife lodged some eight or nine inches in the body of some foe, you could find the instrument for your vengeance quite easily in Gallatin street. Hundreds of unwary strangers have wandered within those unhallowed precincts to find only a quick transit to eternity in the swift, turbid waters of the Mississippi. Such was Gallatin street. Now, what brought Padilla to the yawning jaws of this mortal hell? Was he in search of some deeper dyed villain than himself to do an act of blacker infamy than he dared to undertake? or was it only a stroke of policy—to find a steady-handed minister to execute the damnable scheme he seemed to be hatching, as, seated on that box, his cheek firmly pressed upon the palm of his left hand, whose elbow rested on his knee? No matter; there he sat this summer afternoon, in the shade of the tall building opposite—the subtle north wind just cooling his fever-heated brow. Had Padilla been less absorbed, he certainly would have noticed two men emerge from one of the dens in Gallatin street, the larger of

whom had a vast quantity of red hair on his face, and the other, without whiskers, a decided pug nose, and the unmistakable contour of a New York Bowery boy of the time.

Of course, you will at once recognize our honest old friends, William Rankin and George Snapp, the former in disguise, to defy recognition, and the other, in his own and perfectly individual rig and trim. Georgy being a stranger in New Orleans, and entirely unknown to Padilla, no disguise was necessary for him, much to his satisfaction; for Georgy could not bear the idea of parting company with his square-tailed green coat, low-crowned, straight-brimmed, glossy black hat, black and red silk cravat, tied in a square knot, with the flaming ends sticking out under either ear, plaid vest, drab pantaloons, and square-toed boots.

Yes, these two men were Rankin and Snapp, and they came to be there in the following manner. The reader must remember they entered the Pig and Whistle a few moments after Padilla left that place; and while Padilla was listening and watching about Belleville's house, Bill and Snappy having parted company with Captain Bang in the Place d'Armes, concluded that instead of regaining their lodgings, they would beat up some of the old haunts of Drowsy Peter, in the hope either of falling in with him, or at least some of his old associates, from whom it was barely possible they could gather some information touching the Don's presence in New Orleans.

Now, as soon as Bill and Georgy reached the sidewalk, the quick eye of the latter gentleman caught the figure of Padilla seated on the box at the end of the street, and with one of his peculiar jerks of the head, he said to his companion:

"Say, honey! there's a chap on some kind of a lay. Now, I wonder if he couldn't give us some noos of Padilly?"

As Snappy spoke, Rankin turned a steady look toward the object of present interest; but as Padilla's face was partly averted, and partly concealed in his left hand, and as he was also most

skillfully disguised, Bill did not have the slightest suspicion of the truth, and shaking his head slowly, said:

"No, Georgy; he's some outsider I never seen in my born days before. He's too trim for any of them deego fishermen or fruit-sellers; and I tell you, Georgy, that all the ruffs that knowd the Drowsy in this blessed burgh, was fishermen and West Ingy fruit-peddlers. That aint no one, I know."

"All right, my charmer," said Georgy. "Which way shall we steer now?"

"Right for the market, Snappy, where we'll git a glass of that frozen lemonade to kill the cussed hot air of this street we've bin swelterin in this last half hour."

And away they went up Gallatin street to the market, seated themselves in one of the many booths where ice cream and lemonade were sold to the hot, dry, and dusty passers by. As good or bad luck would have it, Rankin had no sooner finished his last observations to Snappy, and started for the market, than Padilla, having finished his quiet labor apparently to his satisfaction (for a smile—a grim smile—pervaded his face), started to his feet, and with rapid strides crossed into Gallatin street. As he gained the sidewalk, his eye lit upon the retiring figures of our friends, who were not more than fifty yards in advance of him. He stopped in an instant. It struck him he knew the larger of the two men before him. Another keen survey almost convinced him he beheld his old oarsman, Bill Rankin. And so strongly did this idea fix itself in his mind, that he determined to follow the men and satisfy himself beyond all doubt. He accordingly dodged into a doorway until Bill and his companion had gained a greater distance from him, then followed them with the keen scent of a bloodhound and the stealthiness of a tiger.

Now, Rankin and Snapp being entirely without suspicion that their movements were watched, and being more than half inclined to believe Padilla was yet absent from New Orleans, commenced

a lively conversation touching the quality of the cream and sherbet they were eating, from which they branched out upon their own prospects—the length of time they would yet be wanted by the lady Lucretia—what kind of business would best suit them, and *where* they were to be located, etc. They thus consumed about half an hour, when Rankin proposed to settle the bill and leave. As he raised his head to call the boy who had attended them, he saw a pair of black eyes fixed upon him through a slit in the canvas at the opposite side of the tent.

There was a fascination in those eyes. Bill's gaze was instantly fixed upon them; his eyes dilated, his lips became rigid, his nostrils were widely distended, and he breathed through them with the fiercest emotion. In an instant Snappy saw the eyes in the canvas, and guessing all the truth, with the rapidity of lightning he drew his slung-shot from his coat pocket, and hurled it at *the* eyes with such force and precision that the deadly messenger sped through the slit where *the* eyes had been.

"Padilla!" shouted Rankin, the spell that bound him being broken by the no less sudden than fearful action of his quick companion, and the next instant the two heroes were in full pursuit of the Spaniard, being themselves close followed by the boy who attended the ice cream kettles, and a policeman, by virtue of a strong idea that Bill and Snappy were putting in practice a simple expedient to avoid paying their bill at the stand.

Padilla led the chase, with the speed and nimbleness of a hunted stag, through the market direct toward Gallatin street; nor were his energies at all weakened by the cry of "*Stop thief! Stop thief!*" that was raised by the boy and policeman, caught up and reëchoed by a number of idlers in the vicinity, dozens of whom joined in the pursuit without knowing of whom or for what. Snappy outran Bill, but Padilla preserved his distance with unflagging speed, until he reached an open door in one of the before-mentioned dens in Gallatin street, through which he

disappeared like a shot from a cannon. The next instant Snappy arrived at full speed, just in time to see the door slammed, shut and bolted, completely covering the retreat of Drowsy Peter to some place of security, for from the moment he entered that door all trace of him was lost.

The next parties on the spot were Bill, the boy, and the policeman, who arrived almost simultaneously, and as Rankin, without speaking, placed his shoulder to the door to force it open, the minister of justice seized him by the collar and said :

"You are my prisoner."

"The hell! you say, your prisoner? What fur, my cock-a-wax?" said Bill, as he turned toward the man who held him by the collar.

By this time a crowd had collected around, and Bill saw that all further attempt to pursue Padilla then would be fruitless.

"You'll see what for when I git you in the *boose*," rejoined the officer, as he clapped his nippers on the wrist of Rankin's right arm with the skill of an artistic thief-taker.

Snapp, seeing there was some error on the part of the officer, now interfered, thus addressing that gentleman :

"Say, daddy, do you know exactly what you're about? What charge have you to make against this man or against me? for I'm this man's friend, and was runnin for the same reason that *he* was runnin."

"That's just what I was thinking," rejoined the officer, "so I'll take you in, too."

He made a grab at Georgy's coat collar with his left hand, in doing which, he got a handful of that gentleman's red and black cravat, to his great annoyance. But, being as cool as he was quick, Snappy cast his eyes askance at the officer's hand and the disturbed condition of his own coat and cravat, then clapping both his hands into his pantaloons' pockets, cocking his head to

one side and looking at the officer full in the eye, with an expression half comical and half serious, he said :

"Say, do you see what you're doin to my coat and neckhankercher ? Now, jist take a taste of advice from a friend, and maybe it may save you a sore nob. If you want me and him (pointing to Bill) to go to the *boose*, as you call it, why we'll go like gentlemen. So take your fives off, my hearty, or I'll settle a snifter on your mug that'll stop your kissen for a month. Take 'em off, I tell you, or "——

Now, as Snappy delivered himself of the above, he jerked his head several times very ominously, while his under lip began to protrude after the fashion of a bull-dog about to attach himself to the leg of some unfortunate ; the officer not really knowing them to be guilty of any offence, became slightly alarmed at Snappy's positive manner, and in the presence of so many people, too, took his hand from Georgy's collar, and looking about him, seized upon the ice cream boy and demanded of him, why he had raised the cry of stop thief. At this point Rankin interfered and told the whole story about starting in pursuit of a villain without paying for the cream they had eaten. The boy declared Bill's statement to be true, and added that he had not seen the sailor-looking chap running ahead, at the time he first cried stop thief, whereupon Rankin handed the boy twenty-five cents, the difficulty was adjusted, and the officer offered to treat the party for his mistake. Then turning to Bill, whose hand he had released, he apologized for the roughness of his treatment, and hoped to be forgiven.

Bill accepted the apology, and told the officer he would have "lifted him clean out of his boots," if he had not felt sure he was mistaken. Then excusing themselves from drinking, owing to a strong desire to look after the *sailor* they had been chasing, Rankin and his friend took their leave of Gallatin street and the crowd.

When once more by themselves, they consulted as to the first step to be taken, now that Padilla was certainly in New Orleans. After various plans of pursuit had been suggested and abandoned, it was agreed they should proceed forthwith to Belleville's and tell Lucretia the news. When they arrived at the mansion, it was nearly dark. The now happy family were all assembled in the drawing-room.

Lucretia had just taken her seat at the piano when the servant entered and announced that her two serving men were in another room, waiting an audience. Lucretia rose immediately and quitted the room. And here it is necessary to make the following explanations.

Lucretia had related to her father and Monthemar as much of her own history as Padilla had imparted to her, and all the circumstances that occurred during her trip to and from New York and while she remained in that city. Consequently, our friends Rankin and Snapp stood in high estimation with Lucretia's friends. The Marquis of Calatrava and Monthemar had not been long in concluding that Padilla could be no other than the villain Santarim, since he had told Lucretia he had been her mother's lover and the robber of her child. So matters stood on this evening.

When Lucretia entered the room where Rankin and Georgy were seated, they rose and told her what had happened; nothing being omitted. She left them for a moment, and returned with her father, M. Belleville and Monthemar; when, after a calm deliberation, it was resolved that Rankin and Snapp should try to get hold of Padilla that very night, and on the following day, the marquis was to make an affidavit against Ramagosa, the Marquis of Santarim, alias Pedro Padilla, for the abduction of Lucretia and the murder of Beatrice Lopez in New York; and being a fugitive from justice on account of those crimes, he would be liable to arrest in New Orleans, though he would have to be tried in New York.

That night, Snappy having disguised himself, and Rankin having completely changed his own, they visited every hole in the first and third municipalities where Bill thought it possible Padilla might harbor, to no effect. The Don could not be found.

The next day, affidavits were made against him as a fugitive from New York, charged with abduction and murder, a full description of his person and the several disguises he was known to wear, was furnished to the principal policemen of the city, and a reward of one thousand dollars was privately offered for his arrest. But weeks rolled away, and nothing was heard or seen of Drowsy Peter.

During these weeks of fruitless search, the Marquis of Calatrava had been busy in expediting the marriages of his daughter Ephigenia, with the Viscount Montmorencie, and of Margaret Belleville with Mr. Hammersley. It was now the twenty-fourth of September, and the marriage day for both couple had been fixed for the first of October. The most rare and costly presents were bestowed on the ladies by their fathers and lovers. Elise had declared that her share was quite enough to set up a jewelry and fancy dry goods store, and demurely inquired of her dear "Meg" and "Chreechy" (as she persisted in calling Ephigenia) whether they would not *sell* their finery at half price to her, when the *show* was over. She vowed she felt quite old maidish at the prospect of so soon losing the *dear children* whom she had brought to their present perfection, and talked of a cottage in the country where herself and her father, with a few favorite cats, dogs and parrots, might pass the remainder of their days in peace.

We have just said it was the twenty-fourth of September. The day was gloomy; a sharp, chilling, fine rain was driving upon the city from the northeast. All day long, it had stormed in New Orleans. The streets were deserted by every one who was not forced to be abroad. The sudden change in the weather demanded closed doors and windows, and fires to make a room

cheerful. Belleville's front drawing room was at that moment probably the most cheerful one in the city. All the family were seated in that apartment. Elise, Monthemar and the old Marquis were, as usual, engaged in a war of wit and good humor. Ephigenia and M. Belleville were deeply engaged in a game of chess which was closely observed by Mr. Hammersly. The calm and reflective Margaret stood by the front window, the heavy curtain of which entirely concealed her person from the passers by, yet she could see all that passed without. Now, as we first see her, she is evidently buried in some deep and absorbing reflection. Her eyes are vacant, though calm and mild. Now some pleasing thought steals gently through her mind, for a scarcely perceptible smile disturbs the gravity of her beautiful mouth, and then all is deep thought once more. But now look at her. The chain that bound her is surely broken, for see! her eyes are all animation, her mouth is slightly rigid—brow contracted, nostrils distended and her bosom heaving with a strong emotion. She is gazing fixedly on some object in the street, which seems to fascinate her. No one in the saloon observes her, and she seems to be wholly unconscious of the presence of company. Now let the reader step noiselessly behind the maiden and see what it is that rivets her attention. Ah, a man! his visage almost concealed by shaggy black hair that hangs at least six inches below his chin. He is dressed like a river laborer, and wears a shiny black oilskin hat with a round crown and broad brim as if to turn the rain from his neck. His face is savage in appearance, and his wild black fiery eyes denote the most fierce and subtle intelligence. It is not the appearance of the man which holds her in such intense interest; it is that which he is doing. See! He has climbed upon the front steps of the mansion and is gazing through the very next window to that at which Margaret is standing. The rain now fell more heavily than it had previously, and streams of water poured from that shiny hat and shaggy

beard; but the eyes lost none of their fiery lustre. Now the expression of his face is entirely changed. The pupils of those eyes suddenly dilate to a frightful size and brilliancy—his lips are parted, and through the intense black moustaches a double row of teeth appeared that would rival the snow for whiteness.

Who *is* the man? and what does he see that seems to afford him such savage joy?—were questions that sailed unanswered through Margaret's mind, while yet she stood gazing with the most painful intensity upon him. And now the man retreats from his position at the window, to the sidewalk. It was not dark yet; the man gazed quickly up and down the street no living thing could he see at that moment, then quick as thought he was again at the window, through which he gazed but once, when disengaging his right hand from the railing, he drew from under his coat, a *Derringer* which he cocked, and took deliberate aim at some one in the room. But let us pause a moment before he pulls the trigger, and take a look at Margaret.

There she stood, her attitude unchanged, but the expression of her beautiful face changing with every action of the bearded ruffian without. When he retreated to the sidewalk, she was relieved of some anxiety; when he returned to his former position, she became more excited than before; but when she beheld him draw a pistol and aim coolly and deliberately at some one in the very room where she was standing, the effect on her nerves was so terrible, that she sprang forward with a piercing shriek, dashing both hands through the window glass; and at the same instant the ringing report of a pistol burst upon the inmates of the room, while a few bits of plastering crumbled from the wall, not a foot from the head of the old marquis, denoting where the bullet had found a bloodless resting-place. In an instant, Monthemar and Hammersly were in the street, while Margaret was conveyed to her room in a state of insensibility.

On reaching the street, not a soul could Monthemar or

Hammersly see. The noise of the pistol and the crashing glass had either been swallowed by the roaring gale, or if heard at all, was unheeded by any. On returning to the house, our young gentlemen were wringing wet, and bitterly disappointed at failing to overtake the assassin.

Margaret, very fortunately, was uninjured by her dangerous feat, and soon recovered her serenity. Ephigenia was not long in pointing to Padilla as the perpetrator of the outrage; and the fact that the shot had been clearly aimed at the Marquis Calatrava, left no doubt in their minds, that the gazer in the window was the veritable Marquis of Santarim, our old acquaintence "Drowsy Peter."

CHAPTER XXII.

RETRIBUTION AND CONCLUSION.

PRECISELY three months had flown away since the incidents related at the close of the last chapter. It was now the morning of the twenty-fourth of December, and just one year since this history opened. The morning was clear and bright, the weather as soft and mild as a northern May morning. The streets were thronged with merry faces, troops of children were hurrying along, all bearing with them some evidence of the everlasting bounty of the renowned *Santa Claus*. Happiness seemed to have filled up every heart in the Crescent City, and her teeming streets and avenues reëchoed the general joy. Yes! this was the morning of Christmas Eve, and our heroine and Margaret were in the midst of their honeymoon, the preceding October having witnessed the marriage of Monthemar and Hammersly with those two ladies.

Real happiness reigned in the mansion of M. Belleville—both ladies with their husbands, together with the old Marquis of Calatrava, were domiciled there for the time; but a day of parting had been fixed on, when the Marquis of Calatrava was to bear his Ephigenia and her noble husband to his princely home in Castile. Hammersly and his bride were to accompany the party, and with them make a tour of Europe, before settling permanently on his estate on the banks of the beautiful Hudson River near Haverstraw. Elise—our more than ever charming

fairy—was to remain (from choice) with her father, until her sister should return; when the entire family would remove with Hammersly to New York, which city was thenceforward to be their home. Ephigenia was, in all probability, to be separated from them forever. After making the tour of Europe, she was to be conducted to the bosom of her husband's family in France, with the almost certainty of dividing her time between the estates of her father and husband, with an occasional glance at the dazzling gaieties of the French court and capital.

Nor had our friends in New York been either silent or forgotten. The Summervilles had written frequently, and in their turn had been filled with joy on learning the happiness of their dear "Lucretia." The mother had sent letters of congratulation to Ephigenia, and hoped that her own dear Rosalie might be as happy in the summer of *her* life. Harry had also written; and in his own peculiar and enthusiastic style, had told our heroine how wonderful was the story of poor Beatrice Lopez, who had been murdered by Padilla; that the papers contained in the box, given to him by Beatrice just before her death, related a history of the most thrilling and romantic character; and that from certain revelations made by one of the police officers in New York, who had been present at the death of Beatrice, a strong belief had seized on them, to the effect that old Hagar, the housekeeper of Aminadab, had been in some manner connected with Beatrice in their days of youth. Touching Harry's letter, Elise had said she would so like to read those papers—she was so fond of romance in reality. And then she had given her dear "Chreechy," a kiss by way of apology for referring to the past gloom.

Nor had the now sublime Rachael Hawthorne been forgotten in the general joy. I say *sublime*, in speaking of Rachael, and I hope my readers will neither smile nor sneer at the application I here make of that word. Is it not a sublime sight to behold a

wounded heart lifting itself strongly yet meekly toward the throne of God? To behold a woman tearing herself from the black and damning shadows of sin and error, and on the chaste altar of pure penitence, cleansing her bosom with tears of contrition? To watch the patient sorrow of her cloudless face as it turns with subdued hope and resignation to Him, who with celestial joy treasures up each sigh and tear of repentance? I think so, and I hope you will agree with me.

To resume. Rachael Hawthorne had written her congratulation to Ephigenia, and in return had received the most endearing wishes for her future happiness. Rachael and the Summervilles were living on the most delightful terms of intimacy, and in the society of that charming family, the contrite wife found relief from the calm yet oppressive sorrow her past error—or crime if you will—had awakened in her bosom. Her mornings were passed with Rosalie and her mother, improving the gardens; and when the weather permitted, her husband, Adam, was either seated near them, or would follow through the garden carrying pruning knives, rakes, or shears, for Rachael and Rosalie, displaying a childish pleasure at all the little labors put upon him. In their letters to New Orleans, our friends Rankin and Snapp came in for a share of the kindest consideration. The fidelity and courage of Rankin, whose history, as far as she knew it, had been related to them by Ephigenia, together with the child-like tenderness of his nature, were subjects the Summervilles and Rachael loved to dwell on; and he had been duly informed by his dear mistress, that, should he ever visit New York again, his young friends Harry and Rosalie would expect him to live at the cottage as long as he remained in the city. And it was the morning of Christmas Eve.

Nothing more had been seen or heard of Padilla since the stormy afternoon of the twenty-fourth of September. No one doubted that it *was* Padilla who made the murderous attempt on

that day. It had been resolved to keep the whole matter from the public, the better to enable the police to get hold of Padilla; but the reporters got hold of it; the story had been wafted to New York, whose journals republished the account given by the New Orleans papers, with reviews of the operations in that city, by which the Gothamites had been astounded during the previous spring; and Ephigenia had the mortification to find herself once more the chief character in a "thrilling narrative."

To the great noise made by the press, and the large rewards offered for the apprehension of Padilla, was attributed *that* gentleman's quiet, and probable absence. No one thought it possible for Padilla to have remained in the city three months after his bold outrage, without detection, but Bill Rankin; and he was firmly of the opinion that Padilla had not been out of the first and third municipalities since the occurrence. Rankin was so positive in his opinion, and so earnest in his manner of cautioning Ephigenia and her father to be constantly on their guard, that every precaution was taken to prevent a surprise.

Ephigenia, through her husband and father, settled upon rewarding Rankin and his faithful friend George Snapp, in the following manner: through the agency of the register of deeds for the district of Galena, in Illinois, a farm of six hundred and forty acres of fine prairie and woodland had been purchased and conveyed to Rankin. The land was situated on the great mail road from Galena to Chicago, running through the most beautiful portion of fertile Illinois. A fine large building was being erected on the land for the purpose of being used as a country tavern, or roadside stopping-place. And Mr. Snapp had been presented with the sum of three thousand dollars in cash, for the express purpose of entering into a full partnership with Rankin in keeping the roadside inn and a stock

farm, for which purpose their section of land was admirably adapted.

Snapp being a thorough-bred butcher by trade, and having some plain education—being a tolerable chirographist and smart at figures—was well calculated to superintend the cultivation of cattle. As to the tavern business, that was all simple enough, and Monthemar had well calculated, that with the services of a few good country-bred hands to cultivate enough land to supply the household with fruit and vegetables, and the stock with fodder, the new firm of Rankin & Snapp would be able to realize a comfortable fortune in time to pass the winter of life in peaceful plenty. Our gladiators were to start for the West immediately after the departure of the bridal party for Europe, which event was to take place on the ninth of January, it being delayed until that time to enable Monthemar and the old marquis to enjoy the three great anniversaries in New Orleans—Christmas, New Year's Day, and the battle of New Orleans; and it was the morning of Christmas Eve!

The bells of the old cathedral breathed loudly on the almost summer air, calling on the sad and lonely to lay down their sorrows at the foot of *his* altar whose teachings lead his children safely through the valley of death—whose smile illumines the darkest soul—whose love is forgiveness, and whose worship is eternal bliss. There was to be a grand High Mass that morning in the old cathedral, and the marquis, being of the Catholic faith, had determined to attend church during the Christmas ceremonies, to gratify at once his sincere attachment for the religion of his fathers and his curiosity to witness the imposing ceremonies in an American cathedral. At the proper hour the coach was at the door, when the marquis, Monthemar and Ephigenia entered it and were driven to the cathedral. The other members of the family remained at home.

Now, our friends Rankin and Snapp, having heard a great deal

about "High Mass," and not understanding distinctly what kind of a performance it was, had resolved on a trip to church also; and long before the coach of the marquis drew up in front of the stately old building, those gentlemen were snugly situated just within the porch. Snappy having suggested the possibility of a sudden retreat being necessary, a position near the door had been deemed the safest.

The church was soon filled with the élite of our Catholic population. Presently the marquis, his daughter, and Monthemar entered and took seats near the altar, according to a previous arrangement. In passing, Ephigenia caught sight of Bill and Snappy standing near the door, and as she recognized them with a sweet smile, she turned to her husband and told him her guardians were really in the old cathedral. Monthemar told her the admirable devotion of those two men made him regret parting with them; that while Padilla yet lived, he felt *she* would be doubly exposed to danger when her honest steward (as Ephigenia called Bill) and his ever faithful companion Snappy should take their leave.

Shortly after Ephigenia and her husband had taken their seats, Snappy stepped to the door for some purpose, and was struck by the appearance of a priest in close-fitting, long, black robes, with a broad-brimmed black hat, speaking to M. Belleville's coachman. Not liking the appearance of the priest much, he hastily entered the church again and told Rankin what was going on outside; and just as they were about to leave the cathedral to watch the movements of the suspicious-looking saint, *he* entered the church and took a position against one of the large, round columns that supported the organ gallery, as near the front door as our friends were standing.

"That looks bad," said Bill. "I don't half like his standing there like a spy. If he's a real priest why don't he git in with that crowd down yonder by that railing?"

"Ah, Bill," rejoined his companion, "neither you nor me knows anything about the ways of them fellers. 'Tain't no use for us to guess what he's after; maybe he'll take a hand in it when the play begins."

"I tell you, Georgy, that chap's got mischief in him. Don't you see how he cuts his eye into the face of every one he gits a chance at. He's looking for some one, sure, and if *the right one is here*, old long tail will find him. Now, Georgy, jist for the fun of the thing, let's keep him under the spy till he's found what he's looking for."

"All right," said Snappy, "but as all the people have their backs this way, I guess he'll have to wait till the church is out before he satisfies himself; and in that case, you and me won't have much chance to see this mass ourselves! There, the organ's begun to play; so keep your eyes and ears open, but don't talk too loud, for I see a lot of black-muzzled chaps looking at us in no good humor."

As Georgy spoke, the deep, harmonious voice of the organ, in softest melody, came floating to the ear. The first sound was enough to still the slightest whisper. The most perfect silence reigned within that ancient temple of religious devotion, for the great mass of the assemblage knew an anthem was about to be sung by a choir of *artistes* as an opening to the ceremonies. The symphony being ended, the harmony of fifty voices burst upon the reigning silence, waking echoes in every recess of the Gothic pile, and startling the dreamy devotees from the heavenly musing into which the low, plaintive, yet thrilling melody of the organ had wooed them.

So sudden was this powerful strain of melody, that many in the body of the church turned around to get a look of the choristers; and among those who did so, were the marquis and Monthemar. At that instant there arose something of a tussel near the door as if some one were struggling to get through the dense

crowd. At the sound of several suppressed curses in French, English, and Spanish, and sundry groans and ohs, provoked, doubtless, by the grinding of corns on the stone pavement beneath iron-bound boot heels, our friends turned in that direction to see what the trouble might be; and they at once saw the slouch-hat priest, the most savage expression seated on his countenance, forcing himself rudely from the church. This time Rankin got a full, fair view of the supposed priest, and immediately recognized his old enemy Padilla beneath his disguise. He whispered in Snappy's ear, and that instant they both began forcing themselves toward the door; but by this time Padilla had been elbowed out of the door and was immediately lost from their sight. However, our friends worked so successfully against the inward press, that they reached the sidewalk not more than one minute after Padilla, who was nowhere to be seen. On asking Belleville's coachman if he had seen the priest come out, they were told he had jumped into a coach and had been driven off at full speed, the coach only an instant before having turned down Saint Ann street. Away flew Bill and Snappy, and on reaching St. Ann street, saw nothing of any coach. What was to be done! To attempt to overtake the coach would be folly, and to get into the cathedral again and near enough to communicate with Ephigenia and her father, was equally impossible; therefore, all that our heroes could do, was to stand by the porch of the cathedral till the service was over, and then explain all that had occurred. They accordingly took their stand against the outside iron railing, and waited.

In about two hours, the ceremony being finished, the crowd began pouring from the church. Bill and Snappy were on the sharp lookout, but no Padilla was to be seen again. Presently the marquis and his party reached their coach and entered it, as Bill and Georgy ran up and hurriedly related what they had seen. Monthemar proposed that they should leave the coach and proceed home on foot; this, the marquis opposed, stating that Ran-

kin and Snapp could better notice the approach of Padilla toward the coach than if they were on foot in the crowded streets. It was therefore determined to proceed slowly in the coach while Bill and Snappy should act as an outside guard: and thus the party started for home.

To the reader who has never visited New Orleans, it is necessary I should say, the cathedral stands on Chartres street between Saint Peter and Saint Ann street, and fronts what then was the *Place d'Armes*, but which is *now* called Jackson Square, a beautiful garden of flowers and shrubbery, in the centre of which stands the life-like equestrian bronze statue of great Andrew Jackson in military costume. The square then, as now, was open to the public. Beyond the square, about one hundred yards distant—flows the Mississippi River. Thus, from the porch of the cathedral you have a fine view of the river and the opposite shore, the shrubbery of Jackson Square not interrupting the view. Immediately in front of the square, stands a wharf which has long been known as the "Picayune Tier," and just below that wharf, is the Algiers ferry. Then, on the Levee, stands the great market, commonly called the "French Market." The head of this market rests on St. Ann street, and it extends downward toward the Mint, four squares—its lower end resting on Ursuline street immediately at the head of the famous Gallatin street. And the "Picayune Tier," the Algiers ferry, and the head of the "French Market" are all plainly visible from the front porch of the cathedral, the view being diagonal, across the square.

At the time in which this history is laid, this same "Picayune Tier" was famous (and is so yet) for the patronage it received from the brigs and schooners that trade to the West Indies, bringing thence whole cargoes of delicious tropical fruits. And it was here, also, that you might see dozens of skiffs laden with oranges, pine-apples, mangoes, plantains and bananas, chiefly owned by Italians and Sicilians, who peddle them along the

river to the passengers on steamboats about to depart for the upper country. It must be remembered that the trips of our up country boats measure from thirteen hundred to upward of two thousand miles, and it is a usual custom for the passengers to lay in a supply of those fruits for the voyage. It was in this business, too, that Padilla engaged Rankin, on their first acquaintance. *Algiers* is the name of the little town opposite New Orleans; and just below Algiers there is a point of land called "*Slaughter-house Point*," behind which the river takes a sharp turn to the southward. It is at Algiers where ships and steamboats lay up for repairs, and during our dull summer season. It is there, also, the floating dry-docks are. The place is generally peopled by mechanics. From the Picayune tier to Slaughter-house point, the distance is about two-thirds of a mile diagonally across and down the stream. Now these facts must all be remembered by the reader, to fully understand that which is to follow.

We left the marquis, his daughter, and Monthemar, starting homeward in the coach, with Rankin and Snapp following it as an outside guard. The coach passed along slowly down Chartres street, toward St. Ann. The streets were thronged with people and carriages of every description. When our friends reached St. Ann street, the driver was compelled to stop his horses, to allow a mass of cabs, carriages, stage coaches, and drays to disentangle themselves, the street having been completely blocked up by an omnibus and a dray getting foul of each other. The usual sum of dirty expletives was passing to and from the respective drivers of the locked vehicles, and a crowd of people had gathered around, in the hope that a fight would result from the misadventure. The marquis thrust his head through the coach window to see what the cause of the stoppage was, when the sharp report of a pistol was heard, and the marquis' hat fell to the ground. The commotion in the coach, and the scream uttered by Ephigenia, as she heard the bullet whiz past her face, and saw her

father's hat shot from his head, attracted the crowd thither, and in an instant the coach was surrounded by a mass of men. But there were two pair of eyes in that mob more vigilant than the others. These eyes belonged to Bill Rankin and Snappy. They saw the pistol levelled and discharged. They sprang forward, Bill exclaiming, as they did so :

"It is Padilla !" and the chase began. Padilla, in his old disguise of a Sicilian fruit-seller, flew up St. Ann street toward the river, with the speed of a quarter horse, with Bill and Georgy after him.

"Stop thief ! stop the murderer ! stop him !" roared Georgy, at the top of his voice ; and a hundred pair of legs entered in pursuit of Padilla. He gained the Levee a hundred feet in advance of Bill, who was ahead of all the others. The next moment the Spaniard was across the Levee and into a skiff manned by a sturdy oarsman.

"*Pull !* to Slaughter-house Point," said Padilla, as he seated himself and took a second pair of sculls, which he used with skill and vigor. His skiff was not ten yards from the shore, when Bill sprang into another, which was laden with pine-apples, bananas and oranges, with its owner seated on the forward thwart, his sculls in his hands.

"Catch that skiff, and I'll give you a thousand dollars—the man's a murderer !" said Bill, who was standing in the middle of the skiff, pointing with his left hand toward the fast retreating fugitive. As the "thousand dollars" fell upon the fruitier's ears, he settled his sculls deep in the flood, and with a sudden and vigorous jerk, sent his skiff out into the stream, and Bill backward on the fruit, which was piled high above the gunwale of the little craft. Oranges, pines, apples, and bananas flew in every direction as Bill scrambled to his feet, when, seizing a spare oar that lay in the boat, he began to urge it forward at a furious rate, acting as steersman the while.

By this time, at least twenty other skiffs and yawls put forth from the Levee and the vessels lying near—all joining in the pursuit of the Spaniard, whose skiff had gained the middle of the river and was being borne rapidly down the stream, Padilla being too much interested in the pursuing boats to attend properly to the guiding of his own.

"He'll miss the Pint, by thunder!" said Bill. "Give way, sonny, with a will. Never mind your oranges, my lad; the markiss will give you a ship-load if you put me alongside that flying devil. So wack it to her, my hearty, with a will."

At this address, Bill's oarsman—who was an athletic fellow and was pulling at a tremendous rate—ventured to remark, there were a *hundred* boats coming. Whereupon Bill told him they were all after the *five thousand dollars reward* that was offered for Padilla.

At the mention of five thousand dollars reward, the fellow opened his bilious-looking eyes as big as coffee cups, and with an energy that sent a thrill of savage joy through Bill's frame, and elicited the yell of a Winnebago Indian from his lips, sent the now greatly lightened little vessel over the swift current with a velocity that promised success. They evidently gained on Padilla, owing probably to the fact that his skiff was badly steered; indeed at that moment she was actually heading up-stream in order to gain the Point.

This was immediately noticed by the people in the other boats and on the Orleans shore, and a shout simultaneously burst from them to encourage the pursuers.

Here an unlooked for event turned the tide of fortune completely in Rankin's favor. The river was full of driftwood. A large log struck Padilla's skiff with such force on the bow, it threw one of the oarsmen from his seat, his oar crabbed, and the skiff was turned completely around, drifting at least two hundred yards before she was brought again on her course.

And now another shout arose from the pursuers, for it was evident to all that Rankin must overtake the fugitive. And Padilla thought so too, for he suddenly dashed his sculls into the river and rose to his feet—drew a pistol from the breast pocket of his coat; but in the act of cocking it, he lost his balance and fell.

Bill's skiff was at that moment not fifty feet off, and steering so as to come broadside on the enemy, he shouted, "Another lick or two my lad and we have 'em." The fellow did lay out with desperate energy, and just as the bow of Bill's vessel doubled on the stern of Padilla's, *he* regained his feet. Bill sprang at him with the growl of a hungry panther. Padilla fired—they clinched and both went headlong into the river.

We must now go back a little and see what the others were doing all this time. As soon as Snappy raised the cry of "stop the murderer, Monthemar flew from the coach, having observed the marquis was not hurt, and joined in the chase. The marquis, knowing that all immediate danger was past, ordered the coachman to drive up St. Ann street to the Levee; and they got there just in time to see Monthemar and Snappy leap into the pinnace of a brig, manned by four stout oarsmen, and put off from the shore.

"Now boys," said Snappy, "pull for a bushel of dollars; for if you catch the *wagabone* in that head skiff, this gentleman (pointing to Monthemar), will give you each a pile."

"That I will, my lads," said Monthemar, "and even if you are second best, I'll fill your pockets for you. So pull strong."

The sailors gave way manfully, and were not long in passing all the other boats except the one in which Bill filled a place. To catch *that* skiff was now the aim of Georgy, and he yelled to his crew like a true Whitehall coxswain engaged in a race. When the drift log struck Padilla's skiff and turned it round, it was a shout from Georgy and his crew that first struck Bill's ear.

And when it became apparent to Georgy that Rankin would be on board of the enemy before *he* could come up, he grew almost frantic; but when he saw Padilla throw away his sculls—rise from his seat and draw a pistol, he guessed in a moment what kind of service he would be called on to do. In an instant he threw off his coat, cravat, vest and boots, emptied his pockets into his hat, rose to his feet and shouted:

"A few more jerks, my lads, and we have 'em." At that instant Padilla fell. Georgy gave his head a jerk, and cried out: "He's down, by thunder," then as Padilla regained his feet, he shouted: "No he aint neether." Just then Rankin's skiff fell foul of Padilla's—Bill made his spring—Padilla fired and went headlong into the swift flood close grappled with the gladiator. The pinnace was not more than twenty feet from Rankin when he and Padilla made their frightful plunge; and the surging waters had scarcely closed upon them, when Snappy sprang head foremost into the river to save his friend and capture an enemy; another stroke of the oars sent the pinnace over the spot where these desperate men had disappeared beneath the turbid water.

The men threw up their oars and began to look about for the combatants, to save them from drowning. Georgy was the first to rise to the surface. He cast his eyes wildly around him, and seeing something that resembled a coat tail, some distance from him, made a second dive in that direction. In a moment after he reappeared, and uttered one word: "Quick," and then began sinking slowly again. By this time, a dozen other boats had reached the spot, three or four oars and boat-hooks, were thrust toward him, he caught one of them with his right hand, the boats closed round the spot, and fifty hands were stretched out to catch, not only Snappy, but Rankin and Padilla, both of whom were dragged into the pinnace, in a state of insensibility, Rankin having his herculean fingers deeply sunk into the throat of the Spaniard. Rankin was bleeding from the right

breast. The fleet of little vessels were soon at the Levee again, and Rankin was placed in a coach with Snappy, and conveyed to M. Belleville's, where Monthemar, the marquis, and Ephigenia (the two latter having seen the whole affair from the windows of the coach), soon followed with a surgeon.

The wound needed no probing, the ball had entered the upper part of the right breast, had gone through the lung and shoulder-blade, and lay just under the skin, not two inches from the spine. It was immediately extracted, the wound dressed, and the champion put to bed in a critical condition.

A few moments afterward, a police officer entered the mansion and reported the fact that Padilla was dead; strangulation, from the terrible grasp of Bill's fingers, having finished his evil career, and thus was the prediction of Lucretia verified. While a prisoner in the stone house, on the Hudson, it must be remembered she told Padilla, that when death should come to him, William Rankin would surely be his messenger.

The death of the Spanish monster at once removed a heavy load from the heart of Ephigenia, who now saw a life of security and happiness spreading out before her with no saddening feature in the vista, but the present danger of her faithful servant and preserver, Bill Rankin.

Within another hour, a messenger came from the coroner, with information that he was to hold an inquest on the body of Padilla, at four o'clock that afternoon, and politely requesting the attendance of the gentleman shot at, and his friend, to testify in the premises.

When the messenger departed, the marquis, Belleville and Monthemar consulted on the best course to pursue, and they concluded to conceal from the public the real name and title of Padilla, that all the revolting particulars of the past might not be brought to the public mind. The rank and wealth of the marquis and viscount were entirely unknown to all, except the

Bellevilles, and it was considered safest to permit the attempted outrage of Padilla, upon the marquis, to be ascribed to some unkown cause, and the shooting and probable murder of Rankin, to be simply the result of the attempted escape from the consequences of the first offence. Georgy Nippers, who was a close attendant upon his friend Rankin, was summoned to the presence of the marquis, and made fully acquainted with the course of conduct just adopted for the approaching inquest. The party then adjourned to the chamber, where the brave, generous and faithful Rankin lay, attended by the grateful Ephigenia, and the surgeon. The ball had been extracted soon after he reached the mansion, and the sufferer had fully recovered from insensibility; but although he was very feeble, and in a most desperate condition, a smile of triumph and satisfaction was resting on his pallid lips.

As the gentlemen entered the room, Ephigenia was in the act of bathing Bill's forehead with some strong essence which the surgeon had produced, and as the sponge passed gently over his feverish brow, his eyes opened languidly; but when he saw to whom he was indebted for the attention, they lighted up with exultant pride and gratification. He had not yet spoken since his rescue from the Mississippi, and of course he knew nothing positive of Padilla's death nor of the manner of his own escape from the flood; his recollection only served him back to Padilla's *last shot* and their frightful plunge into the turbid bosom of the mighty father of waters.

As the marquis, Monthemar and Georgy came around his bed, Rankin said feebly:

"Where is Piddilly?"

"Dead as a mackerel three days out of water," said Mr. Snapp, with a jerk of his head that clearly implied he was not to be doubted; and then he continued: "but how is it with you, Willy? You look as pleased as a man with a handful of trumps."

A broad smile spread itself over the wounded man's face, as Snappy spoke, and the surgeon smiled also, saying:

"I declare this is pleasant. Now, on my honor and conscience I believe my patient will recover."

"Recover," said Snappy, with an energy that made the professional gentleman start, "who, in the name of everything *valuble*, ever thought he wouldn't? Recover, why, do you suppose there's any luck in a bullit fired by that wagabone Padilly? Now, doctor, mind whot I tell you. I stood by that sufferin angel (pointing to Bill) in New York, when a fever had him dead groggy for weeks; and although all hands thought his soul and body was about to part company forever, every night at twelve o'clock while I was settin in my nuss chair, I seen a sweet sperit hoverin about his bed and smilin on him; and then I knowd he would beat the fever. And now, I see the same angel smilin on him here. But this time the spirit is no shadder, but a real one, sure.

At this rough-pointed, but complimentary allusion to Lucretia, Rankin smiled again, turned toward her and said feebly:

"It's true. He told me about it the wery day we dug you out of that cussed house (I beg your pardon) in Bloomindale."

It was impossible for the gentlemen to restrain the smile provoked by the manners and language of the two friends. There had been but little internal hemorrhage from Rankin's wound, though the ball which had perforated his right lung was from a large sized Derringer pistol; and the surgeon had said they might hope for the best since he felt certain of Rankin's recovery if he could suppress an inflammation. And now that he saw the prostrate giant in such good spirits notwithstanding his weakness and great suffering, and the almost magical effect of Mr. Snapp's purely original style of solacing, he promised, if Rankin would lay still and not speak only when he wanted something, that in two months he would be a well man. At which Snappy inquired if it could not be done in a little less time.

Provision was at once made for the accommodation of George Snapp, Esq., in the mansion, that he might be in constant attendance upon his friend, who was seriously admonished by the surgeon to remain as quiet as possible. Then leaving Rankin to the care of our old acquaintance, Nanny and Lucretia, the marquis, the viscount, M. Belleville, the surgeon, and Georgy, left the chamber to take a lunch and some wine (dinner being dispensed with on this troublous day), preparatory to attending the inquest on the body of Padilla.

Agreeably to arrangement about suppressing all particular knowledge of Padilla, the inquest was barren of all interest beyond the boldness of the attempt to assassinate the marquis. It was currently believed that Padilla was a hired ruffian only, and that the marquis (who was publicly known by an assumed name) had been mistaken for the real intended victim.

The verdict was, that Padilla came to his death by strangulation in the Mississippi River at the hands of one William Rankin, who, from the proved circumstances of the case, was not only honorably acquitted of all censure, but highly lauded for his bravery throughout the whole affair.

On the person of the deceased villain no papers or articles of value were found, so that *who* he was, and *what* he was, remained an impenetrable mystery to the authorities. However, at the conclusion of the inquest, a venerable-looking man of genteel appearance, calling himself Gomez, came forward and stated that he was well and long acquainted with the deceased, and corroborated the statement of several witnesses as to the fact that he was a fruiterer; and this Gomez then asked permission of the coroner to take charge of the body for the purpose of Christian burial. The officer seeing no objection, granted the necessary certificate of death, and the body was removed at once. And this is the last we know of the body of this bad man. But for his condition in life, and the ramifications of his deep villainies—

and for the man, Gomez, who took the body, his connection with Padilla, who he is, and what were the motives which actuated him to do the part of a sincere and sorrow-stricken friend, the reader must turn to the sequel of the present history, which will be issued in a short time, under the title of "Rosalie Summerville, or the Sorrows of Hagar."

And now an eternal summer seemed to have opened, spreading its charming vista to the delighted gaze of our heroine, Ephigenia. But one cloud rested on the fair bosom of her serene sky—the wound of her faithful preserver, Rankin. All else was happiness supreme.

The preparations for departure to Europe went forward with all speed and care. The wardrobes of the ladies, and of the faithful Nanny, who was to accompany her dear mistress till death should part them, were undergoing a thorough overhauling. Belleville was making his arrangements also to leave the Crescent City for Hammersly manor, on the banks of the beautiful Hudson. There was not a sad soul in the house. Rankin was mending rapidly, and already out of danger, to the unspeakable joy of Georgy Nippers, and as Belleville had signified his intention of taking all his servants—some six or sevēn—with him to his new home, they shared the general happiness of the household; and thus the winter passed away.

It was now the middle of March, and the fruit-trees and flowering shrubs were teeming with blossoms. The mocking-bird—enchanting warbler, native of our groves and forests—was awakening the sweetest echoes, from the rise of the morning till the quiet hour of noon. The cane and corn were lifting their rich, broad leaves, in luxuriant profusion, high above the furrows, and the warm, sweet kiss of Spring had given inspiration to every blade, and leaf, and flower.

And Rankin had so far recovered from the wound inflicted by

Padilla, that he and his faithful second were taking walks in the suburbs of the city to quicken his returning strength.

One day, having wandered as far down as the McCarty plantation, they were seated on a log beneath the spreading branches of a huge live oak, talking over their future prospects, when they saw the figure of a woman, dressed in coarse black serge, approaching in a brisk walk.

"What's in the wind now?" said Georgy, jerking his glossy straight brimmer well over his right eye. "That black-bird is sailing plum for this bush. Now I wonder if this is to be another adventure. She's on *bis*, that's sure, and she's booming along under a full head of steam."

"Why, Georgy," exclaimed Bill, with a start of surprise, "look at her well. I'm shot sure if that aint old Hagar, Aminadab Florence's housekeeper."

And sure enough it was Hagar. She walked straight up to the friends, and when within two steps of them stood still, folding her arms across her breast, saying:

"And now my earthly pilgrimage may end, if the God of Abraham pleaseth, this very day. Hagar will die at last contented, for happiness on earth can never more be hers."

"Why, Hagar," said Mr. Snapp, in a tone of pity that reached almost to sorrow, "what, in the name of Moses, brought you to Noo Orleens?"

"I came in search of you two honest hearts; I prayed for success, and the universal God has blessed my efforts."

"But, in the name of wirtue," said Bill, "how did you come to wander clean down here, where there ain't nobody livin or nothin to be seen, a lookin for us?"

"That's easily told," said Hagar, with a melancholy smile. "I saw you accidentally, coming down the Levee. You were too far

off for me to overtake you immediately, but I held you in sight, and followed to this spot."

"Well, sit down, Hagar, and rest yourself on this log," said Mr. Snapp, "and when you're ready, why, you can begin and spin your yarn clean to the end."

Hagar seated herself, observing that her present business would not occupy much time, but care and age had made such severe inroads upon her constitution, the least fatigue was now quite overpowering.

Rankin thought it was a matter of wonder how one so old could endure the tenth part of the fatigue she had already borne. And after a left-handed compliment, touching her personal appearance, from Mr. Snapp, Hagar spoke as follows:

"You, sir (to Rankin), who first saw me during the most unhappy period of my existence—a life so checkered that few indeed are called on by our Father in heaven to suffer so deeply —you, I say, must have been most unfavorably impressed by me. But this man has had frequent transactions with him unto whose house I was servant, and knows well (turning to Georgy, with a keen, quiet look) that I took no part in his business affairs. —He that is gone"——

"Do you mean Piddilly?" said Bill, interrupting her.

"No. I mean him who perished by the fire of an avenging God—him for whose mixed blood I perilled my immortal soul." Then lifting her hands and eyes devoutly heavenward, she exclaimed: "Oh, Father of our people, comfort thy poor servant, for she is bent down with sorrow, even unto ashes."

As she finished speaking, she crossed her arms upon her withered bosom, in deep humility and prayer.

"Now, don't talk so, and give way to grievin in that manner, Hagar; it only makes us all feel bad, and jist, too, at the time when all was going on so smooth and nice," said Bill.

"Forgive me for speaking of myself," she rejoined, "I know

there is none to share my woes, none to feel for my sufferings, no heart to pity the outcast and forlorn daughter of Israel."

"Now, don't say that, Hagar," interrupted Bill; "I don't care a fig *whose* daughter you are; I'm sure no one can talk of—of God and heaven as you do, and be bad in the bargain. Now, if you are in distress, jist say so, and me and Snappy 'll help you out of it as sure as your born. So, cheer up a little, and tell right out what you *do* want, for you didn't follow us here for nothin—that's sure."

While Rankin was speaking, the old woman gazed on him with an expression of mingled pleasure and wonder. She was not the being they had schooled themselves to think she was, while they were in New York. Though much of her language, in point of meaning, was lost on the honest, tender-hearted Rankin, it was of such an impressive and tender character, that the gladiator's feelings were touched in her behalf. His offer of assistance was perfectly sincere, and it was this very sincerity, which Hagar fully appreciated, that awakened in her sorrow-stricken bosom a genial flame, that she imagined the coldness and contempt of the world, for the people of her religion, had long since extinguished.

"I believe you, Mr. Rankin," said Hagar, "for I am now fully acquainted with your bravery, faith and sincerity. There is one service you can do me, and no more. Attend to me well. You must, by this time, be well aware that Padilla came frequently to see Aminadab Florence, during the time he was plotting for the recovery of the dressing-case which contained the proofs of the lady Lucretia's identity."

"Yes, and to steal the lady too!" said Bill, with a half savage expression of countenance, interrupting the old woman in her story.

"No, no!" said Hagar, "you are wrong. By the faith of my fathers, I swear to you that Florence was totally ignorant of

the Spaniard's villainy against the person of the lady you so faithfully served."

Rankin was satisfied by Hagar's oath, and she resumed :

"Well, on one occasion, Padilla and Florence had high words with each other, but I could not hear the cause of the quarrel However, after the Spaniard went away, Aminadab came upstairs where I was sitting, and told me Padilla had accused him of stealing a miniature likeness of a lady, set in diamonds Aminadab denied the theft to me, as he had done to Padilla. Never hearing about the matter again, it passed from my memory.

"One day—many weeks after the death of Aminadab—I opened one of the many boxes I had removed from the old house at the time I left it, and to my surprise, found, among some old papers, the likeness of a lady in Spanish costume, set in a locket surrounded with large diamonds. It immediately occurred to me that the locket was the identical one Aminadab had so stoutly denied having taken from the Spaniard, since, had it been a trinket obtained in the ordinary course of his trade, it would have been with the mass of his movable property. I then saw an account of the restoration of the lady Lucretia to her friends in the public papers ; and after maturely considering the whole affair, I concluded the likeness I had found was of some one related to the abducted lady, perhaps that of her mother, and I resolved to pursue the lady to New Orleans, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of my conjectures, and if they proved to be correct, I would have the consciousness of having atoned, as far as lay in my power, for some of the evil done by the lost Aminadab."

"And the locket ?" said Bill.

"Is here," said Hagar, drawing from her bosom a small parcel, carefully rolled in a bit of blue cotton cloth, which she quickly opened, and displayed the jewelled case. Rankin's eyes no sooner fell upon the painting than he exclaimed:

"By thunder, Snappy, it's the phiz of madam's mother, and as sweet as *Wenus*. Jist look at them eyes. Aint that her mouth to a tee? Why, Hagar, you've made me the happiest sinner on earth, *you* have."

Now, Mr. Rankin, although he had told his friend to look at "them" eyes, and asked a question about the mouth of the picture, had taken the best method possible to prevent Mr. Snapp from doing as he had been requested; for no sooner did he feel assured he held the likeness of Lucretia's mother in his hand, than he jumped from his seat and capered about on the grass like a boy who had just made captives of a nest of young birds. In vain Georgy called on him for a sight, the poor fellow was so overjoyed at the possession of the prize, he heeded nothing his friend would say; but as everything has an end, Rankin's ecstasies subsided, and Mr. Snapp was blessed with a sight of the picture, which he unhesitatingly pronounced a perfect likeness of Lucretia.

"Well!" said Rankin, his eyes sparkling with pleasure, "this will be the most hearty *noose* we ever took to her, won't it, Georgy?—Hagar, you shall have the honor of giving it to madam, and then you'll hear how she can went her feelins when her heart is touched. Come! let's put off at onst. We can git a buss at the Cotton press and sing the *noose* inside an hour."

The old Jewess laid her hand gently on Rankin's arm, an expression of satisfaction lighting her aged and care-worn face, and said:

"No, Mr. Rankin, I will not see the lady, for I cannot endure questioning on the subject of that picture, nor on the past. You, who have been so true to her, and to the noble instincts of a manly nature, shall be my messenger. Tell the lady, that Hagar, although the inmate of the lost Aminadab's house, was never his companion in crime. Say, that although a daughter of the down-trodden tribe of Israel, there is no kindred blood to

him flowing in her veins. Tell her, a deep, painful and impenetrable mystery linked our fortunes together, that an oath, such as the children of our race never violate, bound me to Florence, even unto death, that death has dissolved my oath, that I am free, free! to seek the sunny home of my childood, to rest in peace till time restores me to eternity! Grant me strength, Jehovah!—God of our fathers, to regain my long lost home, that my latest sigh may be breathed in the cottage where the first escaped these withered lips."

Overcome by some powerful emotion awakened by memories of the past, the venerable Hagar covered her face as she ceased speaking, and a gush of tears seemed to relieve her bosom of some long pent-up sorrow. And Hagar wept not alone. The vast clear blue eyes of Rankin were suffused, until o'erleaping all restraint, the big tears fell in plenty on his manly cheek yet pallid from the effect of his severe wound. No one murmured. Hagar's tears relieved her aching heart, while Rankin's were the result of a touching painful emotion for the afflictions of another, which he could not understand, but could feel for, with all his honest tender nature.

The language and manner of Hagar more keenly excited the curiosity of the philosophic Snapp, than his sympathy. Not that he had no heart for the suffering of another, but he had his feelings under better control than most men. Tears were very strange and seldom visitors to his eyes. Rankin's almost fatal illness in New York had strained Mr. Snapp's feelings almost to the water level, but a jerk or two of his small, round, pippin-like head, always proved a safeguard against the rising flood.

This gentleman then stood by, a passive witness to the scene in which he had not yet taken a hand, to use his own style of expression. After surveying his friend and Hagar a few moments in silence, allowing sufficient time for the tears to run out, he said:

"Come, Hagar, the past cannot be cured, so you should look to the future for a brighter and a happier time than you have had. If you don't wish to see the lady yourself, why, Bill will deliver the picture all safe and sound; but I say, Hagar, them stones is waluble, and the madam will want to tip you something for your service. Don't you think, after all, you had better go with us?"

"No," said the Jewess, "I have every faith in you both—I implicitly believe your statements as to the strong resemblance of the picture, to the lady you serve. My motive for seeking you is explained. When we part now, 'twill be forever—Hagar will be seen no more."

"But your expenses, Hagar. Let the madam pay them, won't you?" said Rankin, who was completely puzzled by the conduct of the Jewess.

"No!" she replied, "not one cent. I have given to the suffering, much, from the store of Aminadab, and yet enough remains to serve my simple wants until the last day. Here, in this field we part; and I beseech you in the name of the noble lady you serve, to follow me not—to make no effort to discover my retreat. Will you promise me?"

"We do," said the friends, extending, each, a hand to Hagar, who pressed them between her own for a moment, then suddenly releasing them, exclaimed:

"May the God of Israel prosper you as you keep your promise—farewell!"

The old woman sped toward the public road, and was soon lost to their view.

Rankin secured his prize, and the friends started for home, losing no time in hastening to Lucretia with the locket which proved to be the likeness of her mother. Great was the joy of the old marquis at this recovery. The locket was on the child's neck when she was stolen, and Padilla must have carried it on

his person through all his wanderings, until it was stolen from him by Aminadab Florence.

In a few more weeks, the time for parting came. The two new married couple with the old marquis, after the most affectionate farewells to Belleville, Elise, and the ci-devant warriors of the ring, sailed for Europe.

Belleville having perfected all the arrangements for the future home and welfare of our two worthy champions, William Rankin and George Snapp, Esqs., shipped them to their new home in the West, where they soon became popular innkeepers and stock farmers.

Having made a final settlement of his own affairs in the South, Belleville, his charming daughter Elise, and their entire household, removed to Hammersly Manor, on the banks of the Hudson, where they were joined in the following spring by Margaret and her husband, after their return from Europe.

If the Bellevilles and Hammerslys were happy in their now united home on the Hudson, Ephigenia, Countess of Montmorencie—the slave for a time—was not less so in the love of her husband, amid the flashing beauties of the imperial city of France!

THE END.

JUN 22 1946